EMPLOYING READING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION: A METACOGNITIVE APPROACH USING POPULAR MEDIA.

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Abstract

This project discusses the use of reading strategies taught with a metacognitive approach to assist those learning English as a second language (ESL) developing reading skills. Research that promotes the use of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension alongside the efficacy of pedagogy using popular media is presented via workshops.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to God who has already written my story, to my parents that have supported me in every step of my career and have shaped me into the professional and person I am today. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my husband and my baby. They are my strength in the hard times, my motivation to achieve my goals, and my inspiration to become the best version of myself.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapters	
1. Chapter One: Introduction	1
2. Chapter Two: Literary Review	4
3. Chapter Three: Project Design	16
4. Chapter Four: Final Project Reading Strategies Workshop	20
5. Chapter Five: Conclusion	37
Appendices	40
References	72

List of Tables, Figures, and Maps

Figures . . . . . Page

4.1: Visualization section goals 21

4.2: Encanto video clip 22

4.3: What is Bruno doing? 23

4.4: Olaf in summer 24

4.5: Visualizing an axolotl 25

4.6: Visualizing anchor chart 26

4.7: Visualizing graphic organizer 26

4.8: Inferring session goals 27

4.9: Finding Nemo opening scene 28

4.10: Finding Nemo questions discussion 29

4.11: Movie Up Charles Muntz scene 30

4.12: Charles Muntz scene discussion questions 30

4.13: Inferring procedural 31

4.14: Inference graphic organizer 32

4.15: Making inferences graphic organizer 32

4.16: Retelling and summarizing session goals 33

4.17: Finding Nemo-Marlin’s Story 34

4.18: Marlin’s story questions. 34

4.19: Olaf tells Elsa and Anna’s story 35

Chapter 1: Introduction

During the reading process utilizing a second language, learners attempt to understand, reflect and gather information from texts using their prior knowledge of the language they are developing. Following, inferring, and connecting ideas is a process that, without the proper instruction or support, can be an exhausting and time consuming endeavor for the learner. In an era of instant communication, textual conversations are often short in length and require near instantaneous comprehension. Delivering a message and finding its meaning is expected to be a simple communicative transition to accomplish. The expectation for simplicity has transitioned into the educational system. Most teachers might have noticed that students are always in a rush when trying to get activities done and long term activities might appear boring. That is why I promote the use of reading comprehension strategies as an effective way of developing and improving understanding for English as a second language (ESL) students in the classroom. Reading comprehension strategies are well known for helping students to become confident and proficient readers. When educators teach students reading comprehension strategies, they are providing them guidelines to reflect upon what they are reading. They are given tools and models for how to think about and address their own reading comprehension during the learning process. As a result of my experience as a teacher and ESL student, I have researched and tried different strategies. I have deployed many of these strategies in the classroom while aiming to improve my students' reading comprehension. For this project, I have selected effective primary strategies, and I have designed engaging workshops to guide students and facilitators through them. The

primary goal of this project is to guide learners through workshops featuring concrete and empirically supported means of deploying reading comprehension strategies. These strategies all aim to incorporate cultural products that effectively engage students in the reading process of a second language.

In a world engulfed by technology where entertainment media has become a popular pastime, choosing to incorporate it into the learning environment can produce desirable outcomes pertaining to student engagement. Being able to fulfill our students' expectations and interests has always been a challenge for teachers. A particularly daunting task of instructors is selecting the proper material according to the levels, abilities, and needs of each individual student. Some research has suggested that people learn abstract, new, and novel concepts more easily when they are presented in both verbal an visual forms (Salomon, 1979).

As an ESL teacher, our time is limited and interventions must be planned to be effective and concise. Currently students and teachers have unlimited information in the era of instant gratification. Students want to be able to realize their potential skills and improve their abilities through high-quality practical material that is easy to follow and comprehend in a short time period. Unfortunately, just like the other skills, reading acquisition and development is a process that requires time and practice.

This project discusses metacognitive strategies that assist learners of a second language to acquire the skills needed to develop reading comprehension. A unique focus of this project aims to incorporate cultural artifacts, specifically popular media clips and vignettes, in order to garner the attention and focus of students. Research will be presented demonstrating the utility of using vignettes and clips from popular media in terms of helping students engage with literature while developing their reading comprehension skills. This project will also provide pertinent literature

relating specifically to students that are in the process of learning a secondary language. In other words, this endeavor's primary purpose is to discuss how popular media can be used as a tool in the classroom while incorporating empirically supported reading metacognition strategies. After providing research on metacognitive reading strategies and the utility of utilizing popular media in the classroom, I then provide three specific workshops that provide hands-on application for instructors in the classroom that wish to help students in general and ESL students specifically in nature.

It is important to consider visual media as a potential tool in the classroom and this project provides evidence. Research will be discussed in the next chapter that supports the main components of this project. This includes the benefits of metacognitives stategies to improve and develop writing comprehension for ESL students in the classroom. Finally, the chapter will delve into the purpose and importance of considering popular media content for the intended audience.

Chapter 2: Literary Review

English is taught in every school in the United States and in many nations around the world. The demand is noticeable as our society transforms further into a globalized technological age. From developing new cognitive skills to improving quality of life, the advantages of learning this second language are endless. However, learning a second language is a challenge that involves acquiring and developing multiple skills simultaneously. The United States education system emphasizes writing and reading comprehension. Reading is considered the center of learning, as written language is foundational when it comes to speaking across cultures and understanding collective beliefs and values. In order to guide students on how to effectively read and digest literature in a useful manner, it is necessary to understand the numerous challenges that students face and provide engaging instruction as well as practice opportunities to overcome them. Popular media, such as films and film clips, provides an avenue for English instructors to present reading skills and strategies to improve student reading comprehension on their learning journeys.

This project discusses the use of metacognitive strategies to assist those learning English in the acquisition and development of reading comprehension. Therefore, the concepts of metacognition and the primary strategies employed in this project will be explored in this chapter. Additionally, research pertaining to reading comprehension that promotes the use of metacognitive strategies will be discussed. Next, the reader will be presented several studies that support the use of media as an engagement tool in the classroom when it comes to learning a

second language. Finally, this project will use popular media clips and vignettes in order to achieve desirable outcomes pertaining to student engagement via workshops.

Overview of reading comprehension in ESL

Reading comprehension is an active process that uses different skills in order to make sense of a text. The reader gathers, interprets, and constructs the meaning of the writing language by interacting with it. During the reading process of a second language, the learner attempts to execute these cognitive operations simultaneously while using their developing English language knowledge (Peregoy et al., 2017) referred to early literacy as an arduous process where the students use their developing English language knowledge, world knowledge, and understanding of print conventions to connect and create their own ideas. Reading is a fundamental skill, and in order to find success in the educational system, students need to be able to understand, reflect and synthesize information from texts using a language they are developing. Guiding the students while they learn and improve these skills is necessary, helping them to understand how our brains work while reading in a second language, assisting them in setting goals and expectations before reading, preparing them for some of the coming challenges and providing them with different possible means to overcome them. Presenting this information to the learner is vital in order to make them aware and capable of reflecting and actively intervening on their own performance, in other words, a metacognitive process.

Metacognition

The term was coined by Flavell (1979), who as a developmental psychologist explained metacognition as a self-reflective process of one's own cognitive processes or anything related to it. Metacognition is then the process where the learner reflects on their own mental behaviors

from a learning experience in order to manipulate the experience or guide it towards a goal. Metacognition enables us to monitor, assess, and modify mental procedures in order to improve our own performance or achieve a learning goal. Throughout the years, psychologists and educators have debated this practice in an instructional and pedagogical context. (Garner, 1988). In the book, *Teaching Students to Drive their Brains*, Wilson and Conyers (2006) further explained the term metacognition and provided instruction on how to apply it in the classroom setting. Metacognitive and cognitive strategies guide students to become more self-reflective and self-directed by understanding why, how, when, and where to use them. These processes allow students to feel in charge of their brains while taking control of their learning experience. Students fully utilizing metacognitive strategies in a sense become "amateur psychologists" (Miller, 1983, p. 272).

Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies include all the practices, plans, and actions aimed to monitor, assess, and direct mental activities in order to achieve a learning goal (Hattie, 2009). Hattie (2009) described metacognition as a “higher order thinking, which involves active control over the cognitive process engaged in learning” (p. 188). It may be also be referred to as the knowledge people have about their own thinking which is considered as an important key to learning and learning performance (Wichadee, 2011). Flavell (1976), defines metacognition as, “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and . . . active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective” (p.232). When students take an active role in their learning, they are able to set and monitor their own

goals (Garner, 1988). This approach to learning allows them to recognize when they are having difficulties as well as think effectively about how to overcome these obstacles. This allows for each student to learn how to best guide their brains to success. Brains are not concrete and can change over time and intelligence can improve with exposure (Wilson and Conyers, 2016). Understanding metacognitive strategies trains your brain and strengthens it by introducing new concepts and means of accessing one's knowledge. The process of input, processing, and output breaks down the process of learning and is featured within dominant metacognitive strategies (Wilson and Conyers, 2016). According to Gourgey (2001), metacognition allows for the assessment of comprehensive student knowledge related to material by identifying issues they are experiencing. These processes involve having students read through text, assess their understanding, identifying issues, then rereading through the text while looking for context clues in order to connect to the material. Students then may ask themselves if they are finding what they are looking for and whether they understand the material while they utilize the structure of texts to assist them with finding information on their journey to becoming better readers (Leal, Crays, & Moetz, 1985).

Therefore, teaching metacognition strategies in the reading process is beneficial in terms of monitoring, understanding, and supporting students with tools to self-direct when needed. Wilson and Conyers (2016) affirmed that instructing students on the subject of metacognition contributes to academic success as they learn how to think efficiently and independently as to not fully rely on their teacher to monitor their progress and determine whenever they are comprehending something or not. It is assumed that the instructor is also in charge of monitoring their understanding and finding their students' largest areas of improvement, as well as the ways to improve them (Garner, 1988). This is not just exhausting for the teacher that usually has a

considerable amount of learners under his direction, but also for the student who becomes a passive agent in their own learning (Hattie, 2009). Encouraging students to reflect and lead their own learning improves their skills as well as their ability to make informed choices while self-directing towards their learning goals. Metacognitive strategies utilized in the learning process have garnered clear evidence of greater student results when it comes to the acquisition of information from material read, as well and improved standardized reading testing scores (Brown, 1995). Vital to this project is a short discussion of metacognitive strategies that will inform this project.

Reading comprehension strategies

Visualizing

Visualizing is an engaging reading strategy where the reader has to create a picture or movie in their mind that represents the ideas and concepts found in printed media. Visualizing helps the learner connect written language to their own experiences and reflect on the ideas of the text in a deep and meaningful way while actively creating new images (Shanahan et al., 2010; Brown, 1988). Visualizing is a strategy used in single strategy instruction for improving reading comprehension. Shanahan et al. (2010) argue that visualization assists with memory retention and the development of one's imagination and perceptions about textual material. This strategy entails reading through sentences and asking students to imagine what the statements are referring to by relying on previous knowledge. Instructors assist with visualization by asking their students to utilize sensory data through touch, feel, taste, vision, and hearing related to the material to create mental constructs. Through the formation of mental images, visualization becomes an effective strategy to understand novel ideas and complex information in the text for

readers (Tajamal et al., 2021). Some of these mental images may be of settings within a story, visualizations of characters, and even action within a literary setting.

Summarizing and paraphrasing

Summarizing and retelling allows for students to focus on the key points of a text and briefly describe them with their own words. Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) argue that summarizing, "requires readers to sift through large units of text, differentiate important from unimportant ideas, and then synthesize those ideas and create a new coherent text that stands for, by substantive criteria, the original," (p. 244). By describing orally or in writing the salient points of what they read, students are able synthesize and simplify big chunks of information for ESL learners who might not have developed an expanded (Shanahan et al., 2010). Research suggests that instruction and practice in summarizing/ retelling assists in development of the ability of students to summarize, comprehend, and recall textual information (Duke and Pearson, 2002). Brown et al. (1995) demonstrated that students utilizing summarizing and retelling experienced improved comprehension and memory of text. This was found to be especially true when instructors focused on telling their students when, how, and why they are using these strategies; which are staples of using an approach oriented with metacognition in mind.

Inferring

Inferencing is reading strategy that requires a higher thinking level skills and allows the learner to gather information from the text. This strategy entails that students generate data, "That is important to constructing meaning but that is missing from, or not explicitly stated in, the text," (Shanahan et al., 2010, p. 12). The learner then is to reflect upon the information make connections with previous experiences and material. Jones (1987) states that the strategy of

inferring is more than, “reading expressions, tones and body language,” it is also about interpreting “text, often said as, reading between the lines where the answers are not explicitly stated,” (p. 1). Hansen (1981) found that children process inference differently than adults and that the process offers unique insights compared to teaching methods that rely upon literal questioning and instruction. Teaching students with a metacognitive approach to inference can assist students as they generate pertinent information useful to creating meaning to the material, even when it is not explicitly stated in the text. A meta-analysis conducted by Shanahan et al. (2010) concluded that when teachers actively teach their students on how and why the process of inference works by providing activities demonstrating the strategy, student comprehension improved. By focusing on finding key words that can assist them in providing clues about textual data, students are able to make inferences.

Teaching for and with metacognition

Research states (Hattie, 2009; Wilson and Conyers, 2016) that metacognition and metacognitive strategies should be taught in an explicit way. As the leader in your classroom, one can make the concept of metacognition more concrete for students by demonstrating it in action across subject lessons. (Wilson & Conyers, 2016, p. 197). This is pertinent to those attempting to instruct writing comprehension in a second language. ESL students may approach reading in a multitude of different ways. For some students, reading might look like connecting ideas and visualizing. For others, it is translation oriented opposite from their peers that may even be focused on pronunciation and intonation. Even though reading involves some of these abilities, the attention and approach the learner actively takes significantly contributes to the

degree in which outcomes are successful. The learner can set up a goal and devise the plan to achieve it.

The instructor can then model the reading process and state it aloud so the students can mimic the experience and have a reference for further expectations. Reading in a second language is not necessarily something that the learner does naturally. Therefore, learners can benefit from explicit instruction to help them understand what and how different skills interact together in the reading process (Hartman, 2001). Reading for different purposes in a second language is something that those in the learning process might not be fully aware. Reading to improve pronunciation, fluency or intonation might be hard for the learner that simultaneously is trying to comprehend and make sense of a text from the developing language (Wilson and Conyers, 2016). Giving the learners a text and asking them to read without guidance might be a recipe for disaster.

As instructor it is important to illustrate, exemplify and model different ways to approach reading. Once the learner has a clear view of reading and its implications it would be easy to determine the outcomes and design an action plan to achieve them. The prefrontal cortex of the brain work as a chief executive officer that is on charge of forming goals and objectives and devising plans of action required to achieve goals by using the cognitive skills required to complete the plans, coordinate these skills in the correct order (Wilson & Conyers, 2016, p. 12). The teacher can help the learner initiate purpose in a way that the focus and attention is going to be directed at a specific task. The human brain is capable of selecting and developing cognitive skills, but it doesn't do this automatically and simultaneously, at least in early stages of literacy (Fleming and Lau, 2014). Therefore, students need to be able to drive the metaphorical car to the places they want it to go but, unfortunately, it can’t be at two destinations at the same

time. Once the student is able to actively reflect upon their performance, they will become more independent and in charge of their learning as they are able to guide and redirect it. Providing the students with metacognitive strategies will give the learners the tools to monitor, assess, and perform independently and take on a mindset focused on growth (Dweck, 2010). This is also beneficial for the teacher since the student doesn't rely on them as the student becomes more confident in their abilities.

The use of media as an engagement tool for learning a second language

With an increased use of technology deployed in education, students and educators can access online resources in an easy and convenient way (Hobbs, 2001). Visual content is no longer solely used as entertainment, but also for educational purposes. Currently, students can access explanation videos, tutorials, investigations etc. Using media engages students, aids student retention of knowledge, motivates interest in the subject matter, and illustrates the relevance of many concepts (Thurn, 2009). A primary purpose of reading is to comprehend a written message regardless of what text medium is examined. It can be difficult for some students, especially ESL learners, to relate to the standard textbook examples and pedagogical approaches related to reading, involving media video clips in the instructions brings the opportunity for the learner to feel connected and familiar with something (Knudsen and Duncan, 2018). You would be hard-pressed to find students that could not identify Elsa from "Frozen" or could at least sing some of "Let it Go" in their native tongue or even in the second language they are working on acquiring. Integrating popular media into one's teaching toolkit can provide students with examples that are more relatable to their experiences while augmenting their ability to grasp central ideas of concepts related to reading comprehension (Wilson & Conyers, 2016).

Knudsen and Duncan (2018) argued for the inclusion of popular media when it comes to teaching in the modern classroom. They found that using popular Disney films was effective in teaching the principles of their disciplines. Film provides a framework for students to more easily apply concepts to the world they know rather than attempting to connect students to examples in which they have no relational basis (Thurn, 2009). The use of media, especially film clips, has been utilized in the classroom by a myriad of instructors across different disciplines (Berk, 2009; Levey, 2015). Traditionally, some instructors have shied away from using film and media in the classroom as a teaching tool as some believe that it carries a stigma of being better used as a "reward" for students or as a pacifier for students on a day when a teacher does not quite have "it" (Thurn, 2009).

Literature on the efficacy of using media demonstrates many advantages to using film in the classroom. Film provides a powerful contextually relevant source of material that provides students a means to learn across cultures. Wood (1992) argued that film offers a "multilingual and multicultural oasis" for students' learning environments, which may exist in an otherwise "monolingual and monoculture society" (p. 4). Similarly, Giampapa (2010) found that material that builds upon the linguistic and cultural resources of students welcomes them to take ownership over their learning and respond more creatively and critically. It provides a bridge and common language across students from diverse cultural backgrounds and the opportunity to connect and participate in their learning experience. Engaging students in the learning process can increase their attention and focus which promotes meaningful and critical learning.

Film and media clips can engage our students in means in which they become more active participants. Unlike traditional pedagogies that may struggle to capture students' interest and attention, popular cultural media can provide a unique means of engagement (Thurn, 2009).

Media clips and film also have been shown to improve student retention of material and concepts which is vital for meeting student and instructor learning objectives (Malinger & Rossy, 2003). Whenever a student observes visual media powerful feelings may be elicited which can have profound effects on one's mind and senses (Berk, 2009). The use of media in the instruction can contribute in the creation of a welcoming learning environment, can increase the student's confidence and can show the connection between cultures through the universal film industry (Knudson and Duncan, 2018; Thurn, 2009).

Film provides a framework for students to more easily apply concepts to the world they know rather than attempting to connect students to examples in which they have no relational basis (Thurn, 2009). Connecting to familiar subjects such as Disney film clips can provide a transformative teaching approach for students. There exists a myriad of potential beneficial outcomes for students when we incorporate visual media into our classroom curriculum. Berk (2009) explored some benefits of film:

Attract students' attention, target students' concentration; create interest; generate a sense of anticipation; energize and/or relax students; draw on students' imagination; improve attitudes toward content and learning; garner a connection with other students and instructor; increase memory and understanding of content; foster deeper creative thinking, inspire and motivate students; set an appropriate mood or tone while making learning more fun. (p.2).

According to Garner (2000), video media allows access to the core intelligences of our students including those that are verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial, and even musical/rhythmic in nature. This project will employ visual media in order to tap into these intelligences and help improve the reading comprehension abilities of students.

Conclusion

Learning a new language can improve one's life in a multitude of tangible ways. This daunting task for students and instructors alike can be eased by incorporating popular media into pedagogical toolkits. This project argues for a pedagogical approach that will translate to teaching literary concepts while improving the reading comprehension levels of students. This project will provide instructions and various activities that are informed by metacognitive research and academic literature to assist instructors on their journeys to teaching reading comprehension. The next chapter, four separate lessons will be provided that use popular media effectively to assist those learning English in the acquisition and development of reading comprehension. All directions will be informed by the literature as students navigate the material. Popular media clips will provide a powerful common language for students in the classroom.

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter, I intend to point out the benefits of employing reading strategy workshops designed with a metacognitive approach in mind for mainstream classroom teachers. Specifically, I will explain how these workshops aim to assist and support English as a second language learners (ESL) in the acquisition and development of reading skills in order to improve reading comprehension. These evidence based workshops were constructed from prevailing literature on metacognition, reading strategies, and pedagogical approaches incorporating popular visual media featured in the previous chapter.

As in driver's education, students need explicit instruction on how to steer their thinking. Wilson and Conyers (2016) argued that "teaching students to become more metacognitive equips them with skills to drive their brains and become self-directed learners" (p. 2). By reading with a metacognitive approach, the learner is able to monitor, assess, and modify mental procedures towards specific goals while self-directing their reading comprehension. Explicit instruction of reading comprehension and reading comprehension strategies allows for the learner to reflect and actively direct mental behaviors to ensure understanding and comprehension of a text on a deeper level (Hattie, 2009).

Workshops provide students a means to engage with pedagogical material in order to improve their reading comprehension and attitudes in general towards reading and language comprehension (Oberlin & Shugarman, 1989; Swift, 1993). The concept of a reading workshop

originally entailed explicit reading sessions that aimed to encourage and support independent reading of literature (Lause, 2004). Although positive results were demonstrated with individually based activities such as mini-lessons, independent silent reading, and reader response tasks, there has been a great deal of increased results of reader efficacy for teachers employing more collaborative based approaches in the classroom (Oberlin & Shugarman, 1989). The workshops designed for this project are more class-based in nature aimed to assist teachers with the delivery of lessons pertaining to reading strategies. These lessons are designed with a metacognitive approach in mind intended to improve student reading comprehension.

By using popular visual media, these workshops are designed to elicit strong engagement with students in a manner that has proven to have a powerful positive effect on achievement (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1989). These workshops feature questions are designed to invoke reciprocal interactions between students and teachers and "wonderment" questions which are questions about material that students genuinely care about which leads to positive conceptual advancement (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1992). Reading strategies of visualizing, inferring, summarizing, and retelling, will be demonstrated in these workshops. The workshops' goal sessions are for the students to recognize the strategies while practicing and applying them in a way to be aware and capable of reflecting and actively intervening on their own performance during reading.

Teaching metacognitive strategies in the reading process is beneficial in terms of monitoring, understanding, and supporting students with tools to direct their brains towards comprehension. Wilson and Conyers (2016) affirmed that instructing students on the subject of metacognition contributes to academic success as they learn how to think efficiently and

independently as to not fully rely on their teacher to monitor their progress and determine whenever they are comprehending something or not as well as the ways to improve it.

Chapter 4: Final Project Reading Strategies Workshops

These workshops focus on the English as a second language (ESL) population, specifically educators that are assisting learners in the acquisition and development of reading skills via a metacognitive approach utilizing popular media. These workshops are offered on educational market platforms for free and aim to provide educational resources for the instruction of reading strategies in order to improve reading comprehension.

The delivery of these workshops is supported by PowerPoint presentations (See Appendix A: Slides). There are three workshops which develop different reading strategies through a metacognitive approach that according to data, showed significant outcomes in reading comprehension. In the book, *Teaching Students to Drive their Brains*, Wilson and Conyers (2006) further explained the term metacognition and provided instruction on how to apply it in the classroom setting. Metacognitive and cognitive strategies guide students to become more self-reflective and self-directed by understanding why, how, when, and where to use them. These processes allow for students to feel in charge of their brains while taking control of their learning experience. Students fully utilizing metacognitive strategies in a sense become "amateur psychologists" (Miller, 1983, p. 272).

These workshops include the use of popular media to enhance learning through three stages framed with a metacognitive approach in mind aimed to assist the learner in recognizing and reflecting upon the strategy. The first stage presents goal sessions and aims to contextualize and describe the reading strategy by using media, specifically film video clips featuring the

concept. The second stage provides examples through activities and discussion prompts to assist students with reflecting upon the concept while forming a deeper comprehension of the material. The third stage aims to provide the learner a space to reflect upon and practice. This stage includes an overview of how to use the strategy through graphic organizers and anchor charts (See Appendix A: Slides).

Workshop One: Visualization

Stage One

Figure 4.1 Visualization session goals

This slide is from workshop one and it starts with the section's goals pertaining to the reading strategy of visualization. Next, a video clip of the movie *Encanto* is presented in a video

clip in which the character Bruno **visualizes** optional paths about Mirabel's (the film's main protagonist) destiny.

Figure 4.2 Encanto video clip

Then, the instructor proceeds to ask different questions in order to guide the learners into the concept of visualization. Through question prompts, students are guided to what it means to visualize.

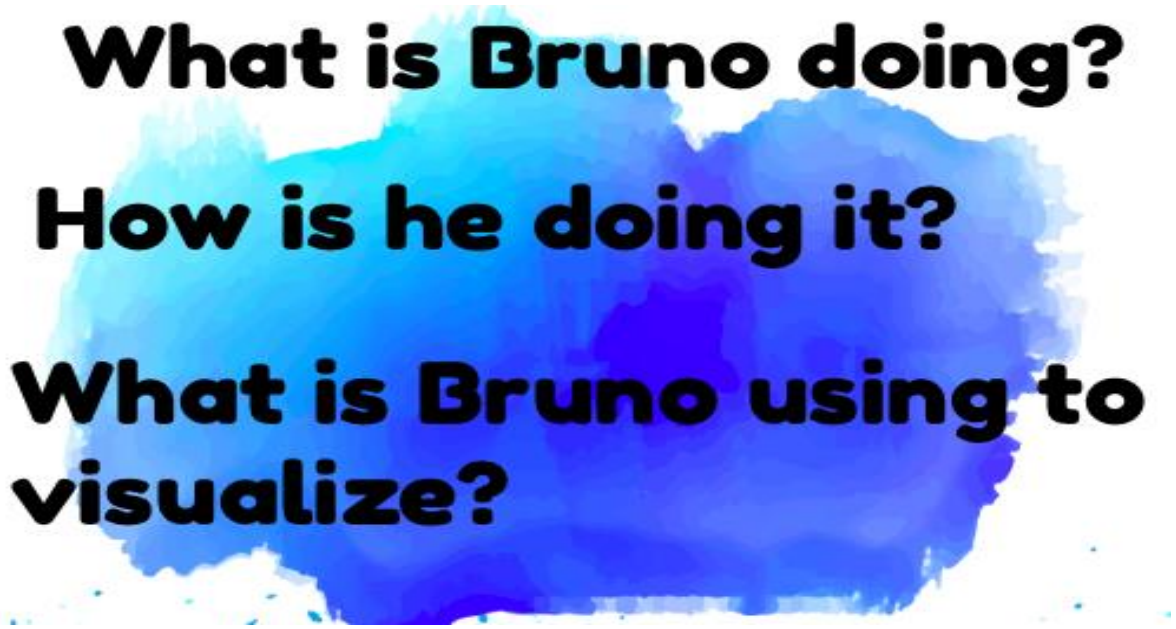


Figure 4.3 What is Bruno doing?

Stage Two

In the second stage, the instructor asks the students to visualize a candle. Next, instructors ask them about their visualizations while pointing out that we all visualize in different ways involving our senses. Prompts involve questions, such as “what does my candle smell like,” “does it have a certain texture,” and/or “what color your candle’s flame,” which lead to discussions about how visualizing involves our senses.

The next slide defines visualizing as the practice of using your imagination and appealing to your senses to create pictures or videos in your head about something you are reading or something you are listening to. Good readers visualize what they are reading to deeply understand, comprehend and enjoy a story.

Stage Three

After reflecting and discussing visualization in the second stage, the third stage begins with a video clip focusing on the different stages of visualization. The instructor shows a video clip of the movie *Frozen* where Olaf (a snowman) visualizes himself in summer, what he would try, see, hear, and do if he was in summer. After the video clip, the discussion focuses on visualization and how students utilize their senses.

Figure 4.4 Olaf in summer

Next, the teacher implores students to visualize an axolotl, which is a small salamander-like creature. Most students will not know what an axolotl is and probably won't be able to visualize one. The discussion will enable the use of visualization as a monitoring strategy since students are not able to visualize something without a former frame of reference. Visualizing

allows the reader to deeply understand, comprehend and enjoy a story by connecting to their prior knowledge and relying upon one's senses.

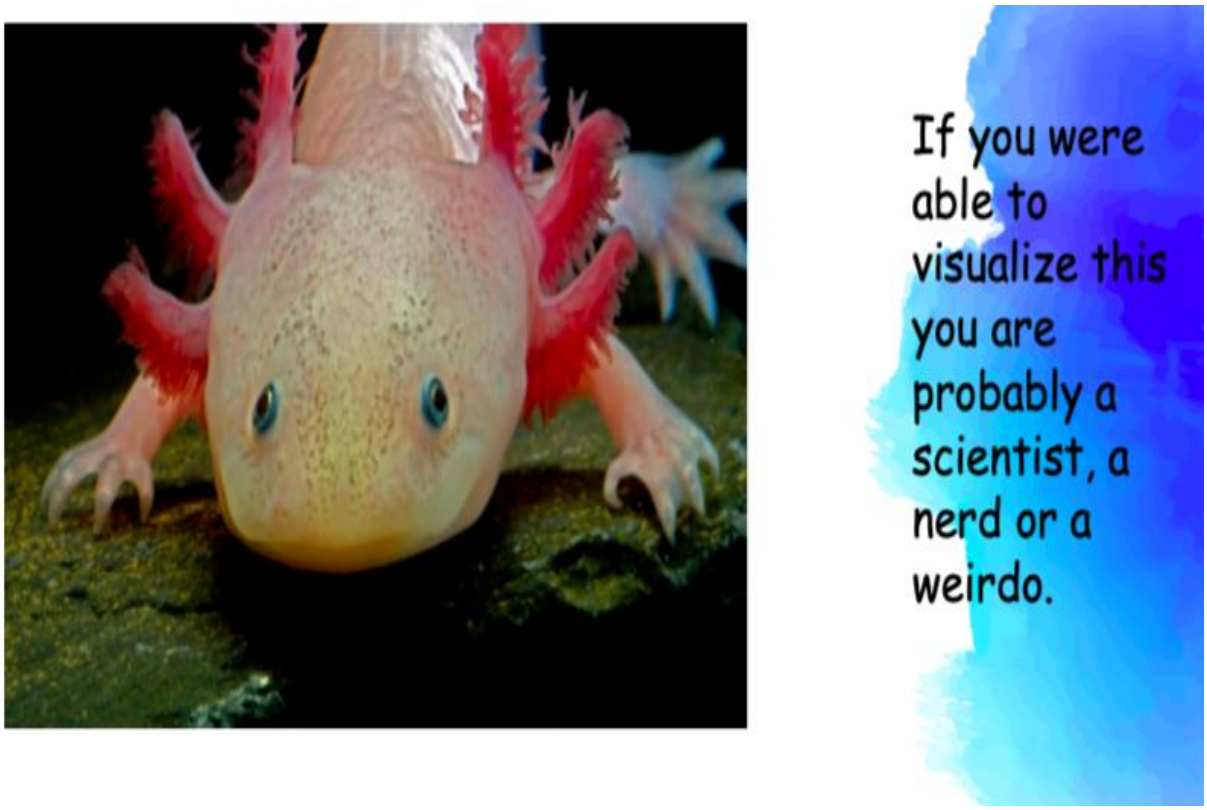


Figure 4.5 Visualizing an axolotl

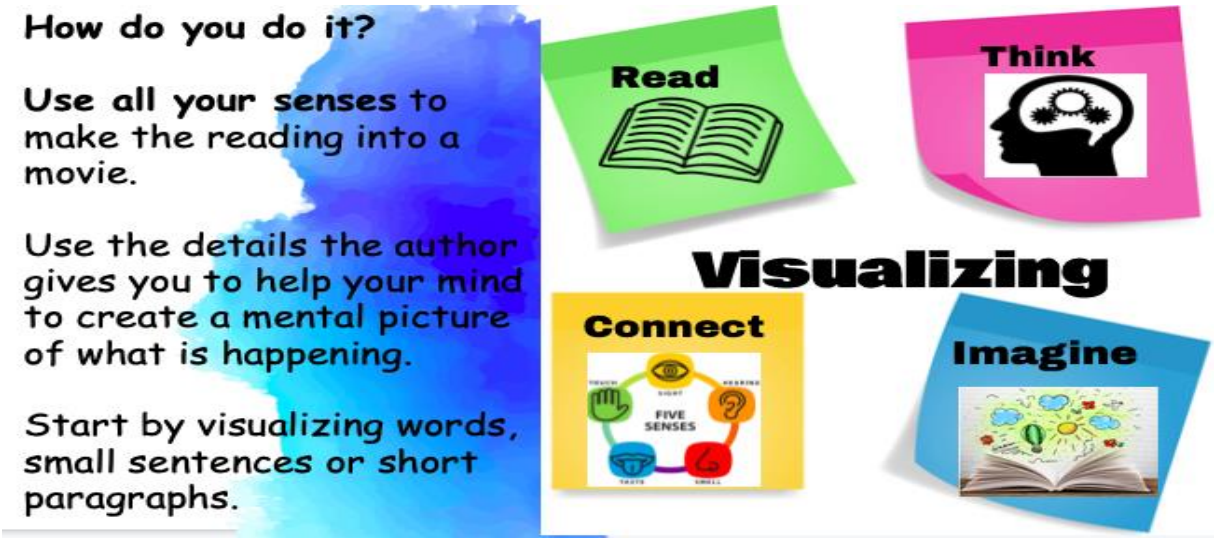


Figure 4.6 Visualizing anchor chart

After discussing visualizing, steps of how to do it are presented and anchored by a chart with the basic steps of visualizing.

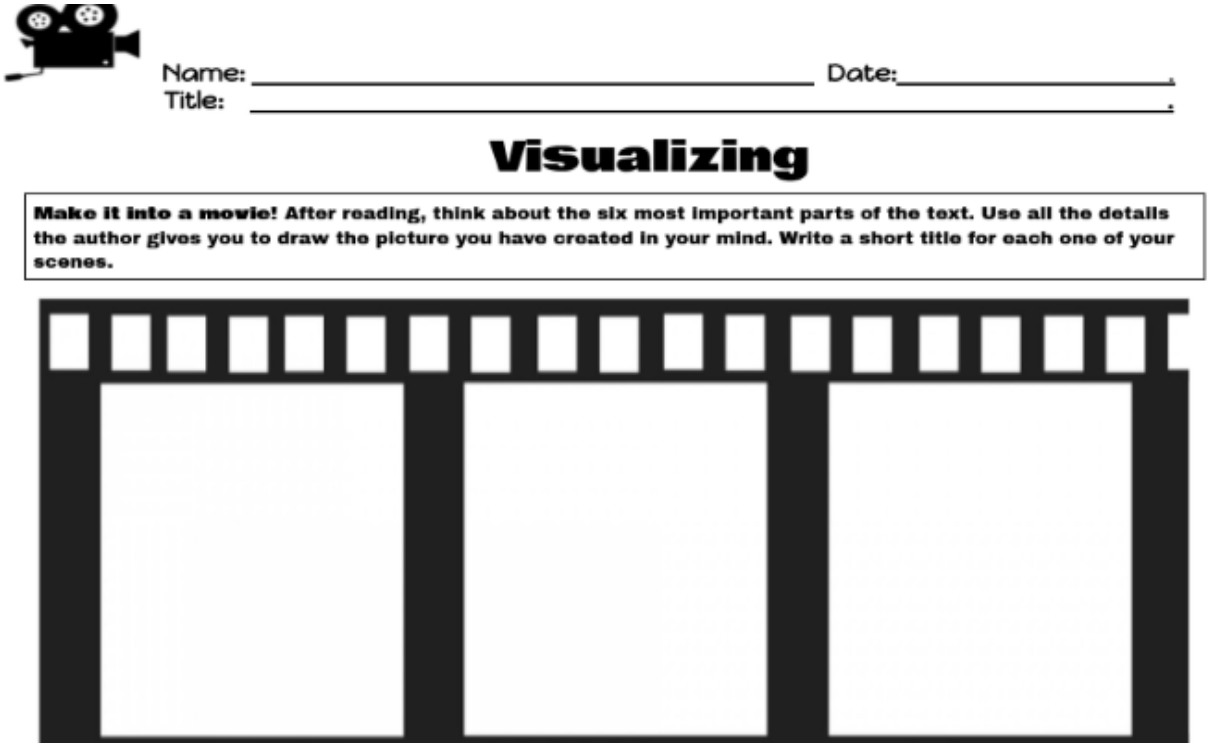


Figure 4.7 Visualizing graphic organizer

Finally, a visualizing graphic organizer is presented. This is an activity where the instructor can have the class visualize a reading as they work through the material. The graphic organizer is also available in a PDF version (See Appendix B), so instructors can make copies of it. This concludes the last stage for this workshop.

Workshop Two: Inferring

Stage One

Figure 4.8 Inferring session goals

The first stage of this workshop starts with the section goals. Then a video clip of the opening scene from the movie *Finding Nemo* is presented. In the video clip, two clownfish Marlin and Coral have found a beautiful sea home in the Great Barrier Reef while awaiting the birth of their 400 little fish. Suddenly, a giant barracuda attacks the home. The subsequent action is not explicitly shown to the audience. Instead, the scene ends with Marlin waking up after the attack and finding just one egg which hatches the titular character of Nemo.

Figure 4.9 Finding Nemo opening scene

The next slide questions students about what happens to Coral and the other eggs. Using context clues and prior knowledge, the students are primed to use the reading strategy of inferring to gather what happened to the ill-fated fish. These questions lead to a discussion about inferring and concludes the first stage.

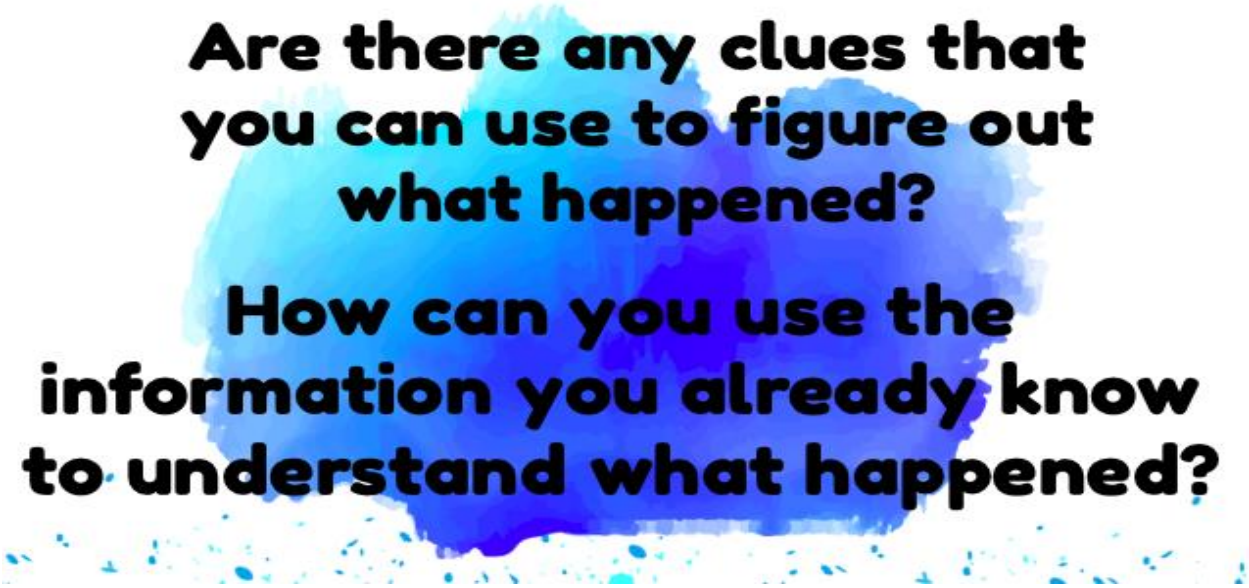


Figure 4.10 Finding Nemo questions discussion

Stage Two

The second stage shows a second video clip from the movie *Up*. During the clip, the film's antagonist Charles Muntz realizes that the two protagonists Carl and Russell have a bird named Kevin that he's been aggressively seeking. In the scene, Charles menacingly throws away his hospitality towards his guests and threatens to capture them instead.

Figure 4.11 Movie Up Charles Muntz scene

Figure 4.12 Charles Muntz scene discussion questions

Next, the discussion focuses on the inferences that can be made from this scene. Inferring is a practice in which the reader uses their previous knowledge (schema) after examining and gathering evidence from a text to discover a message that was not explicitly given (Shanahan et al., 2010, p.12). Students contribute by discussing possible inferences along with a definition of inferring. Advanced readers notice the clues the author is giving them and use their own experiences and prior knowledge to come up with conclusions to better understand a story.

Stage Three

The third stage called "making inferences" provides a practice activity where the students watch the video clip from *Presto* and practice making inferences. Next, a procedural step-by-step guide on how to use the strategy of inferring is presented along with graphic organizers that the instructor can use to provide more practice.

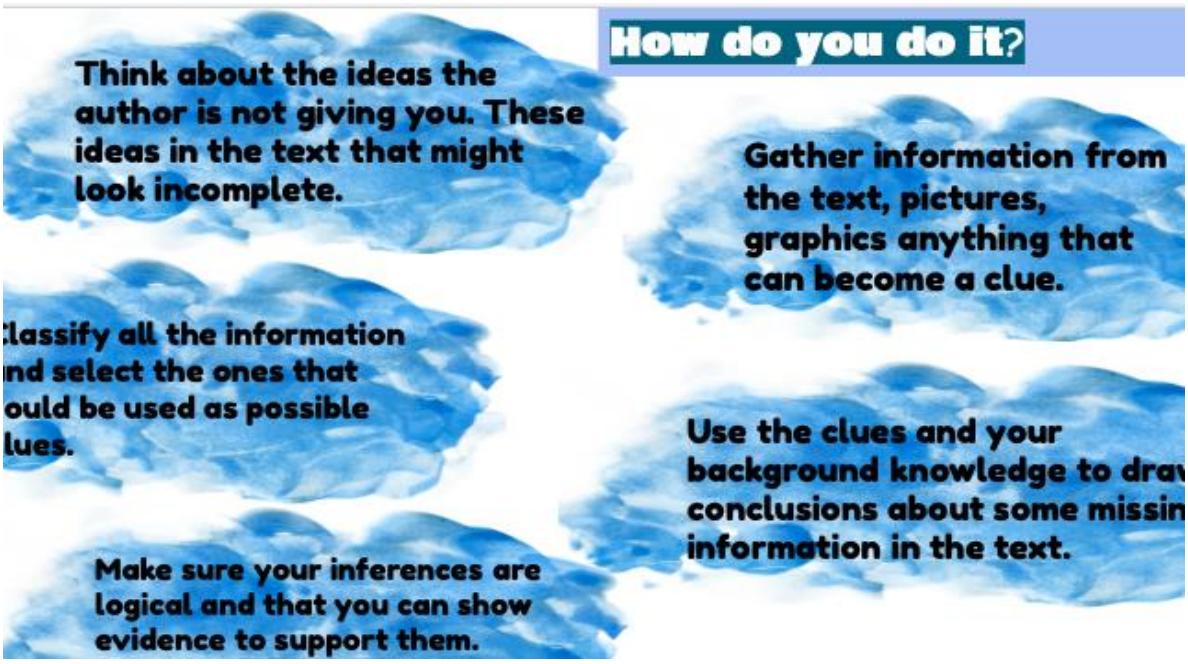


Figure 4.13 Inferring procedural

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading: _____

Directions: Make inferences as you read. Use the graphic organizer below to record them.

Text clue	What I Know	My inference

Figure 4.14 Inference graphic organizer

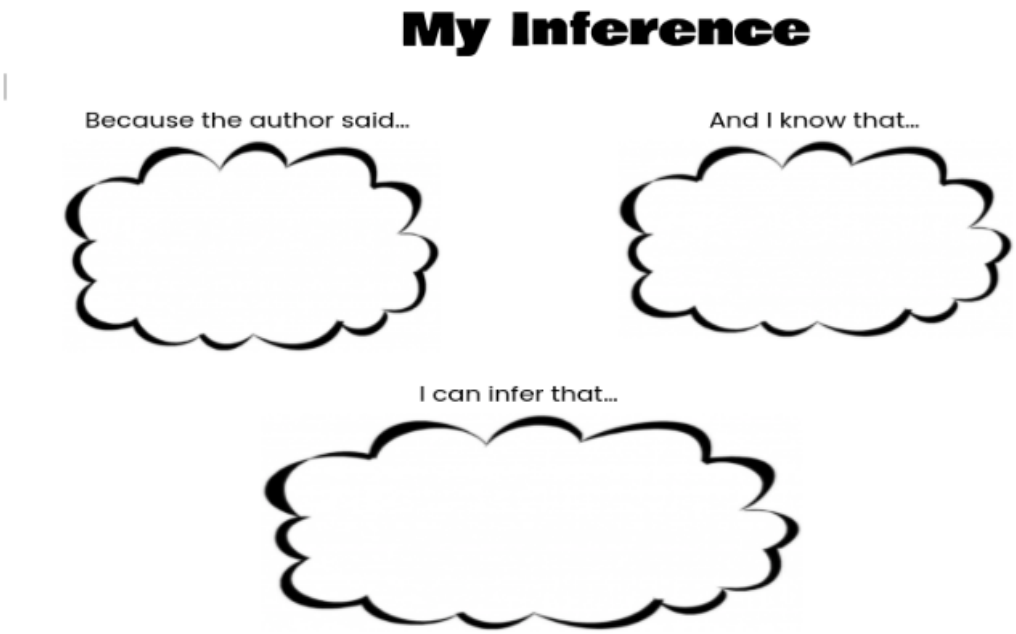


Figure 4.15 Making inferences Graphic organizer

Workshop Three: Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Stage One

This last workshop offers different activities and resources to illustrate the reading strategies of summarizing and paraphrasing. The first stage is similar to the previous two workshops in that it shares the session goals with students.

Figure 4.16 Retelling and Summarizing session goals

Then, the instructor presents a video clip of the movie *Finding Nemo: Marlin's Story*. In the video clip, Marlin (Nemo's father) desire to find Nemo takes him on an adventure with vegetarian sharks, surfer-dude turtles, hypnotic jellyfish, hungry seagulls and more. Marlin shares his story with little turtles and his odyssey becomes famous along the ocean.

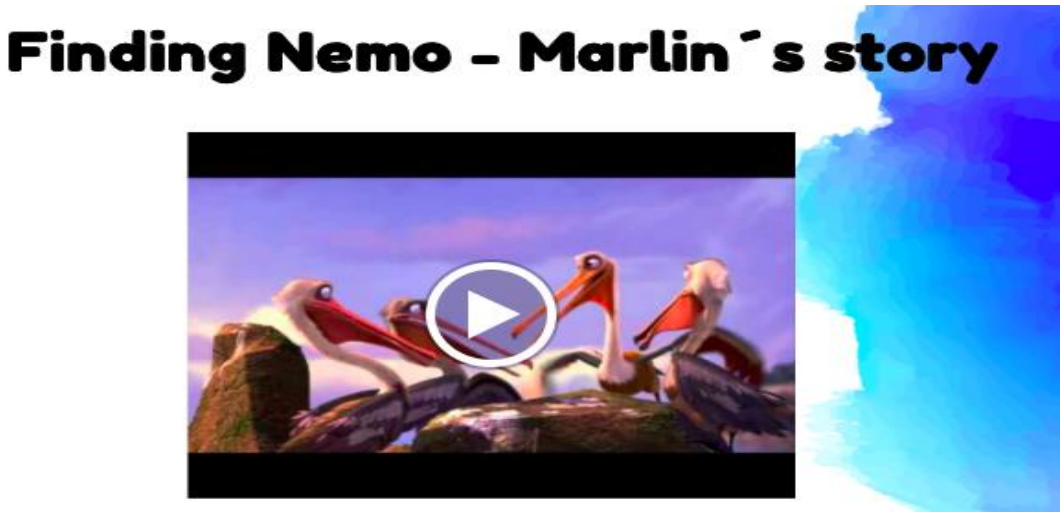


Figure 4.17 Finding Nemo - Marlin's story

The next slide's questions lead to a discussion about the different versions of the journey according to who was telling Marlin's story. This demonstrates how the same story can be told in a multitude of different ways. This offers an overview of retelling and summarizing that helps prime students on the strategies.

Figure 4.18 Marlin's story questions

Stage Two

The second stage defines the strategies. Summarizing is the practice in which the reader identifies the main points in a story and unifies them in a brief and concise manner. When paraphrasing, the reader retells the same story in their own words.

The goal is have readers synthesize the information the author is giving them by connecting main ideas. The students then discuss the clip's ideas in their own words.

Next, a video clip of Olaf telling Elsa and Anna's (the protagonists of the movie *Frozen*) story is presented which opens a discussion about what we do when paraphrasing or retelling a story.

Figure 4.19 Olaf tells Elsa and Anna's story

Stage Three

The following content provides further explanations about the strategies, anchor charts, a procedural step-by-step guide on how to use the strategy of retelling is presented along with

graphic organizers that the instructor can use to provide more practice. The graphic organizers for retelling and summarizing (in the appendix) conclude this workshop.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The research for this project challenged my pedagogical approach and transformed my teaching philosophy. I now find myself utilizing an instructional approach informed by metacognitive research. By applying some of the most significant concepts I have learned along this journey, I was able to understand the challenges of digesting literature in a second language. I have improved my teaching in the reading area where the learner attempts to execute different cognitive operations simultaneously while using their developing English language knowledge (Peregoy et al., 2017).

Upon reflecting on the reading process and identifying some of the obstacles and barriers, I wanted to design effective instructions to better guide my learners and meet their diverse needs. During my search for professional development, I found in metacognition an opportunity to develop, support, and improve reading comprehension for my students. Additionally, this research also spawned more questions and challenges pertaining to my teaching. I questioned how metacognition would work in an instructional or pedagogical context and how to apply metacognition in the process of learning a second language. Specifically, I was curious about how to apply this approach to reading comprehension. These inquiries framed the foundation that guided most of the literature review of this project and the strategies applied. Wilson and Conyers (2006) argued that metacognition and cognitive strategies lead students to become more self-reflective and self-directed by understanding why, how, when, and where they are needed during their learning journeys.

A metacognitive approach provides students with the tools needed to become aware of their thinking before, during, and after reading. It challenges them to think about what skills are needed to comprehend a text and how the brain works when constructing the meaning of the written language. Understanding the process allows the learner to perform, control, and modify procedures during their learning experiences. Another advantage of using a metacognitive approach is being able to monitor one's

own comprehension and identify proper strategies to overcome any lack of understanding while reading. In my experiences, I found the metacognitive approach to be especially applicable to students in the process of learning varying reading comprehension strategies. While creating this project, I selected and implemented primary reading comprehension strategies in order to design workshops with a metacognitive approach. Providing explicit instructions of different strategies to students ensures a deeper understanding of the text examined.

As a former ESL learner, I always appreciated instructors that worked to have their students fully engage with the material. This can be especially challenging for ESL learners in an inter-cultural learning environment that may have diverse frames of reference and cultural products to which they identify. This is why I was interested in researching the value of using popular media artifacts in the classroom. In my experiences, popular animated movies (such as those produced by Disney) often translate across cultures and languages effectively. In fact, adjusted for inflation, eight out of ten of the highest grossing movies worldwide are Disney affiliated (Animation, 2022). Research has demonstrated that reading pedagogical approaches involving media video clips in the instructions brings the opportunity for the learner to feel connected to the material while aiding in student retention of knowledge related to course material (Knudsen & Duncan, 2018; Thurn, 2009). The workshops designed for this project are all centered on fully utilizing popular media in the classroom in order to elucidate reading comprehension strategies for students. Every workshop is aimed at providing engaging questions to guide classroom discussions as well as activities designed to assist with student retention of knowledge and the development of reading skills. Although I have provided three reading strategy based workshops utilizing popular media and driven by a metacognitive approach, this is in no manner an exhaustive list. In fact, one could hypothetically design workshops incorporating these principles to most reading strategies. What is key is finding media video clips that clearly illustrate the core reading strategy and designing questions and activities

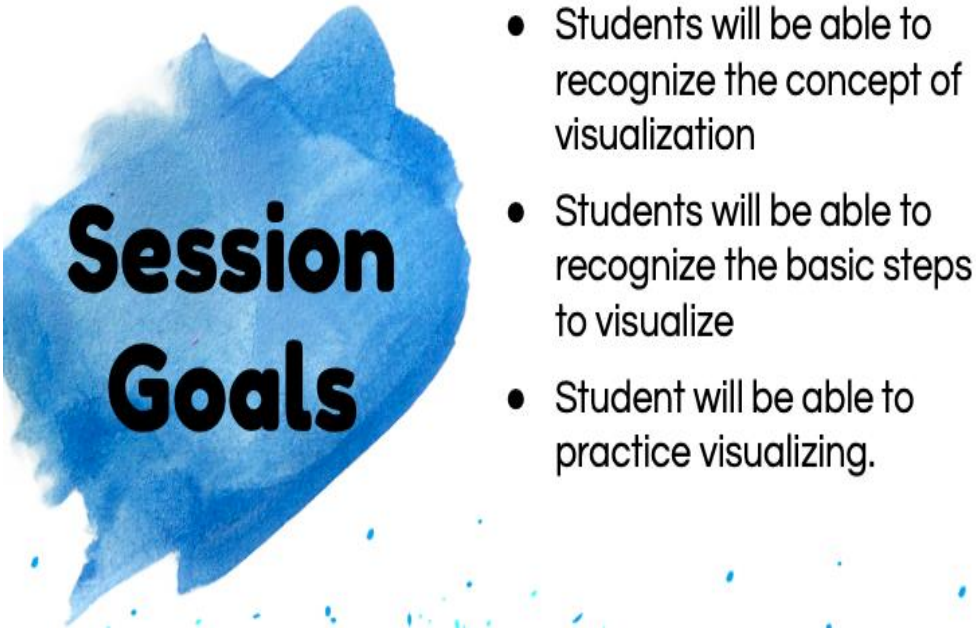
around that sample of popular media. The possibilities for application are only limited by the instructor's imagination.

Finally, these workshops will benefit ESL teachers that are supporting learners in the acquisition and development of reading comprehension. Ideally, they will become more independent and in control of their own learning through the implementation of these workshops. As an ESL teacher myself, I find that independence for ESL students is one of the most difficult things for them to achieve. This is because they usually rely on their teacher any time they do not recognize a word or when they do not understand a text. It is also part of the teacher's role to assess their students' comprehension and provide them with the tools needed when they are failing to understand. These responsibilities can be overwhelming for the instructor and any assistance is usually appreciated. I truly hope that these workshops will bring value to ESL classrooms by providing instructors with a great resource to teach their students reading strategies in a fun way. Hopefully, this will help them to become more independent and confident while empowering them to transform into better readers.

Appendices

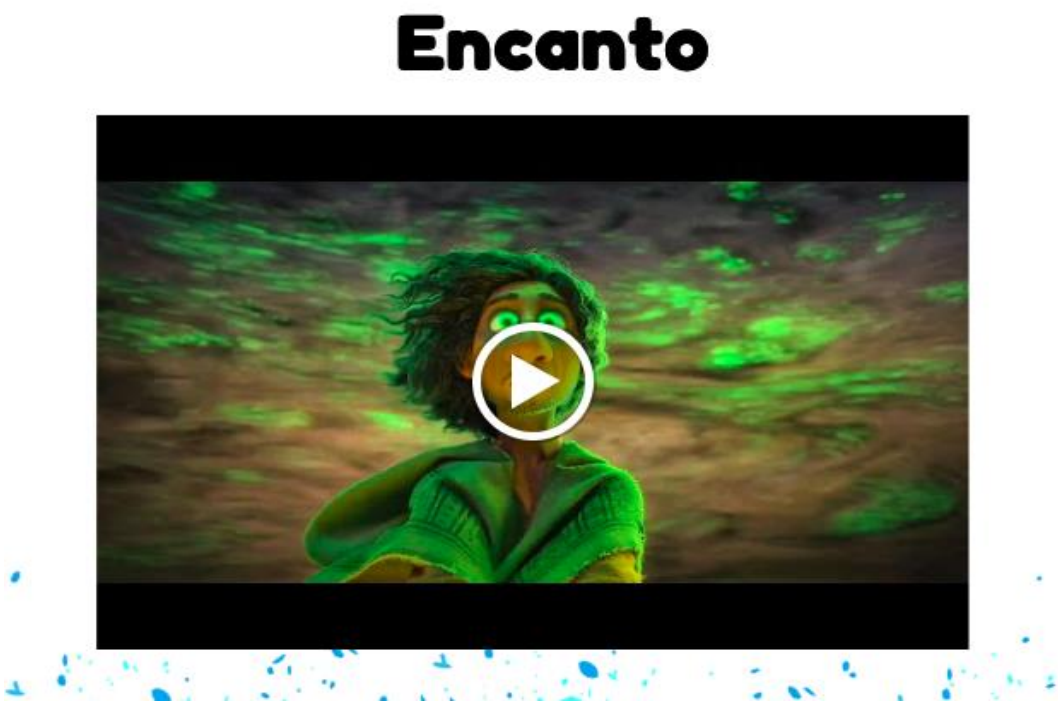
Appendix A: Slides

Slide #1



Slide #2

Slide #3



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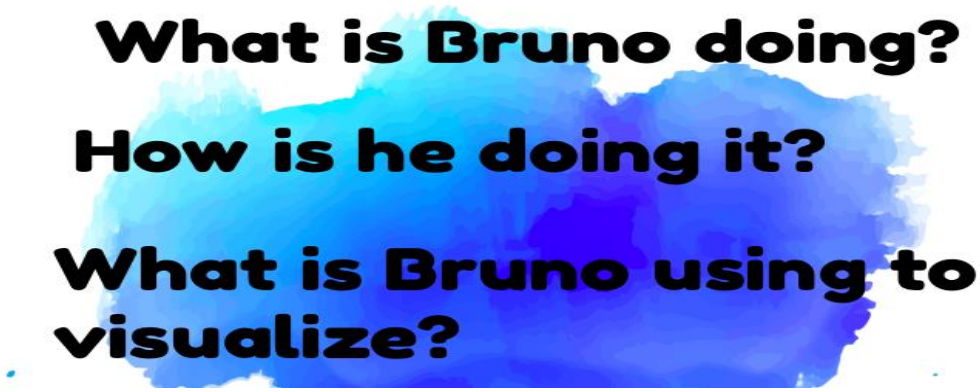
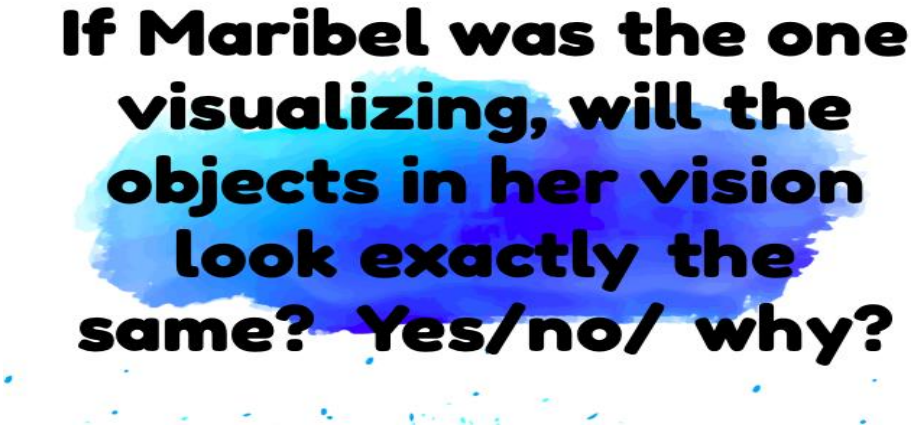


Slide #5

Slide #6



Slide #7

Now I want you to visualize a candle

Slide #8

How did your candle look like?

Think about...

Size, color, smell, shape

Slide #9

"Meaning is created not purely and simply from the words on the page, but from the transaction with those words that takes place in the reader's mind."

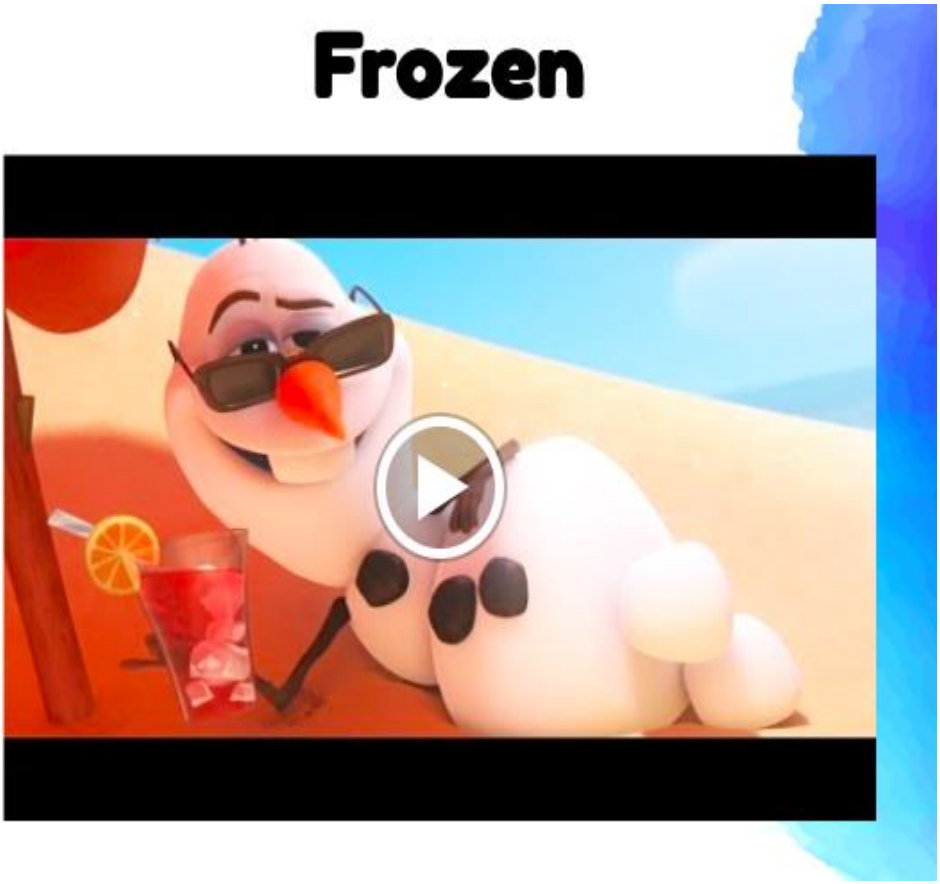
-Kylene Beers and Robert Probst

(Notice and Note)

Slide #10

Which senses do we use when we visualize?

Slide #11



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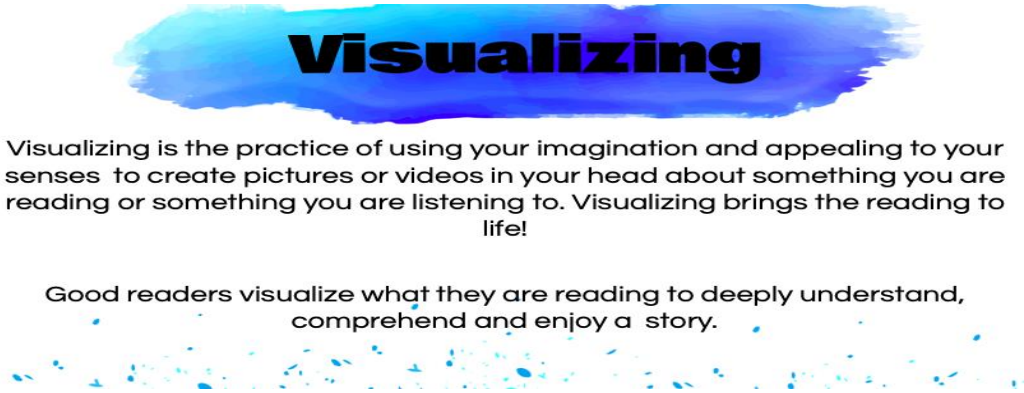


Slide #13

Slide #14

If you were able to visualize this you are probably a scientist, a nerd or a weirdo.

Slide #15

Visualizing is a useful tool to monitor reading comprehension.

We can not picture something that we don't know or we don't understand.

If we are not able to visualize we might need to read again or take steps and repair the comprehension.

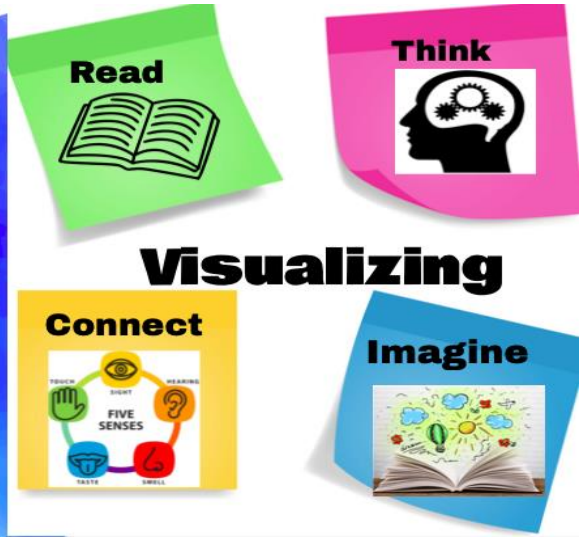
Slide #16

How do you do it?

Use all your senses to make the reading into a movie.

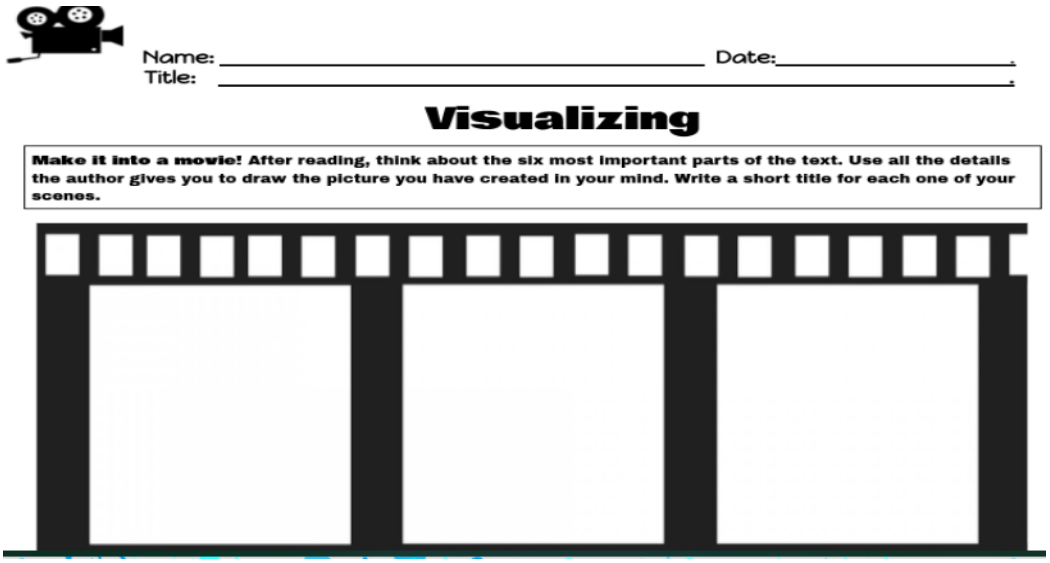
Use the details the author gives you to help your mind to create a mental picture of what is happening.

Start by visualizing words, small sentences or short paragraphs.



Slide #17

Slide #18

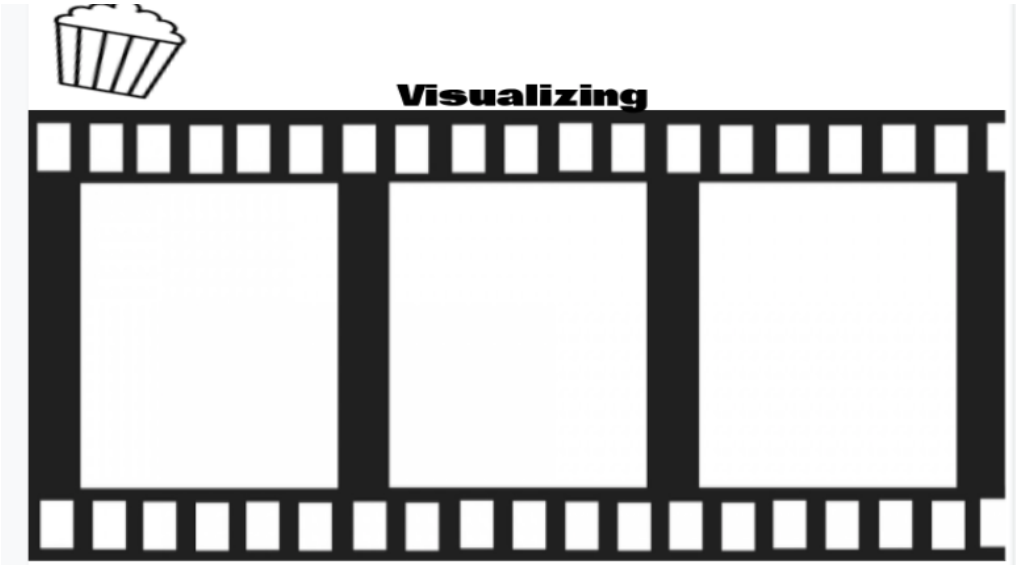


Name: _____ Date:_____.
Title: _____.

Visualizing

Make it into a movie! After reading, think about the six most important parts of the text. Use all the details the author gives you to draw the picture you have created in your mind. Write a short title for each one of your scenes.

Slide #19



Slide #20

Slide #21

Slide#22

Slide #23

What do you think happened to Coral?

What do you think happened to the the rest of the fish?

Slide #24

Are there any clues that you can use to figure out what happened?

How can you use the information you already know to understand what happened?

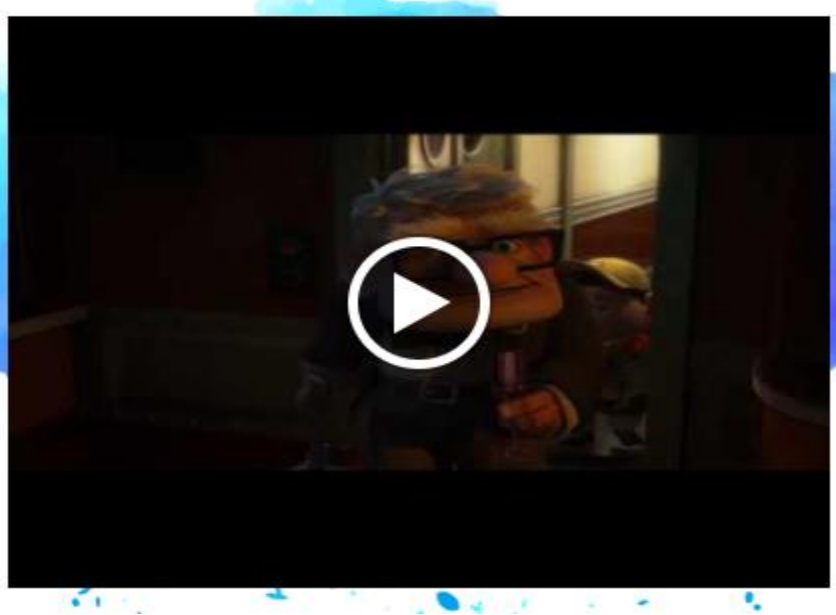
Slide #25

"You can make some inferences about a man's character if you know something about the conditions in which he has survived and prospered."

- Author: Richard Dawkins

Slide #26

UP



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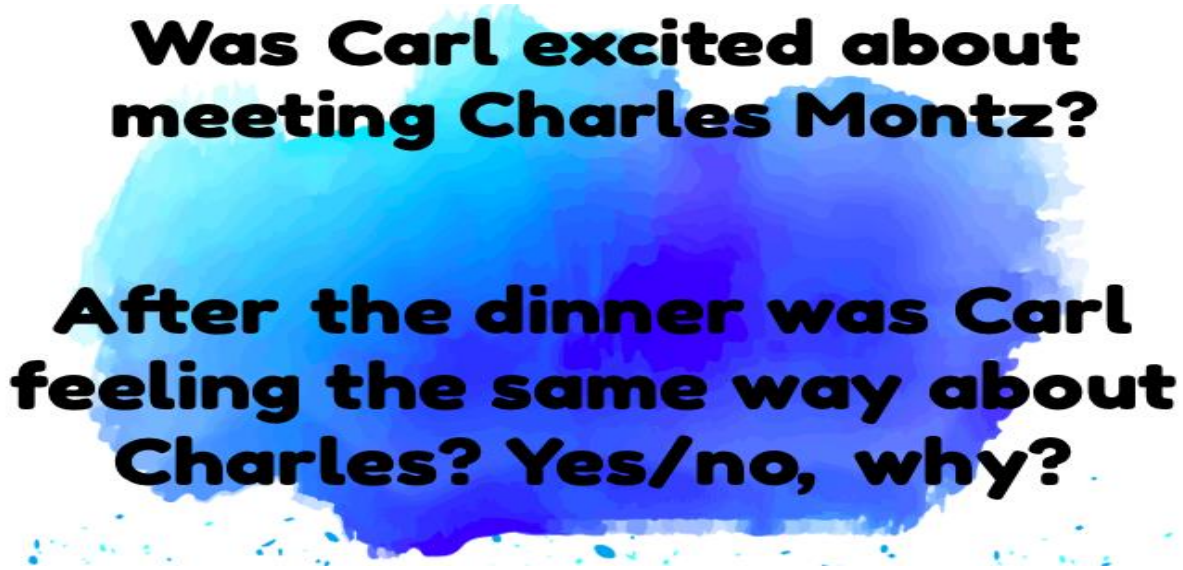

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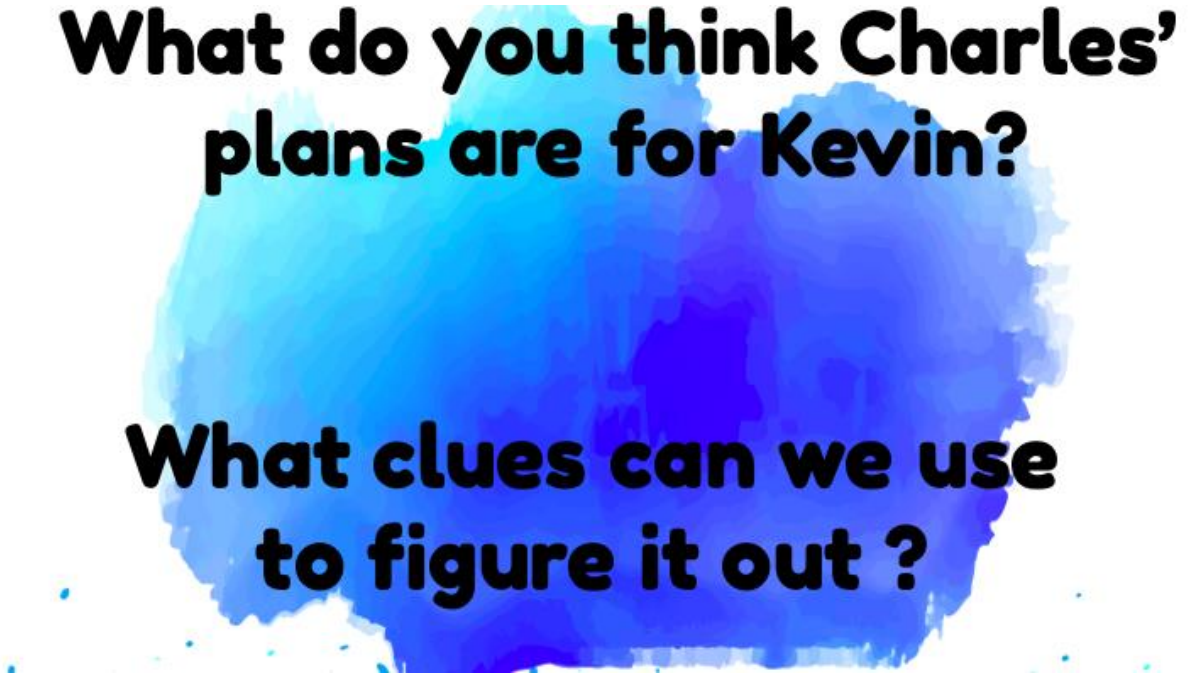

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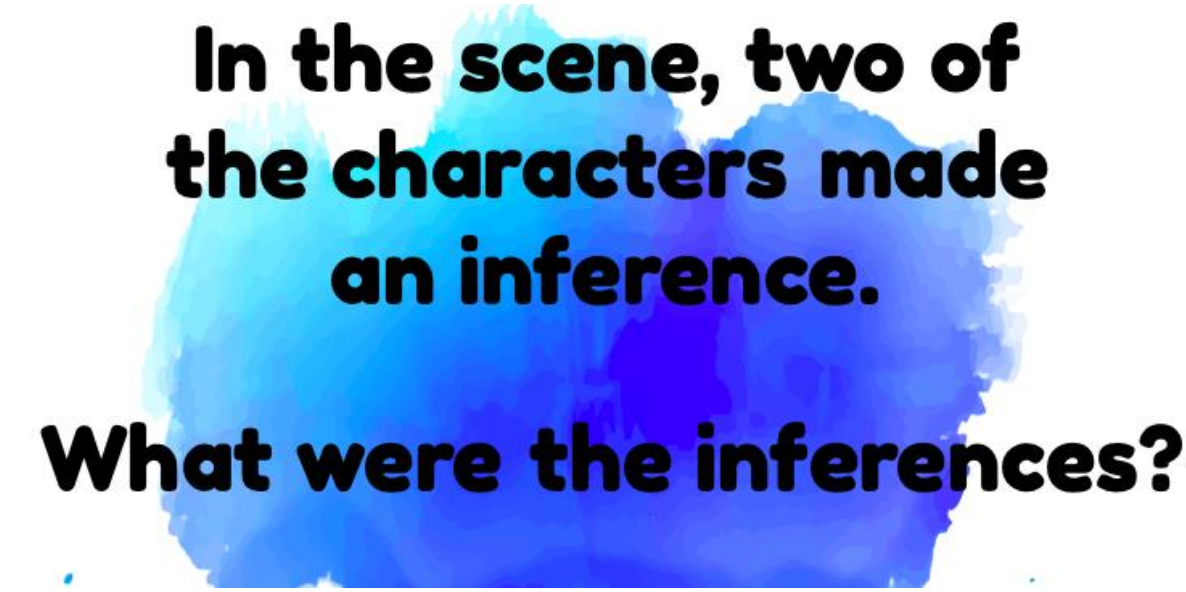

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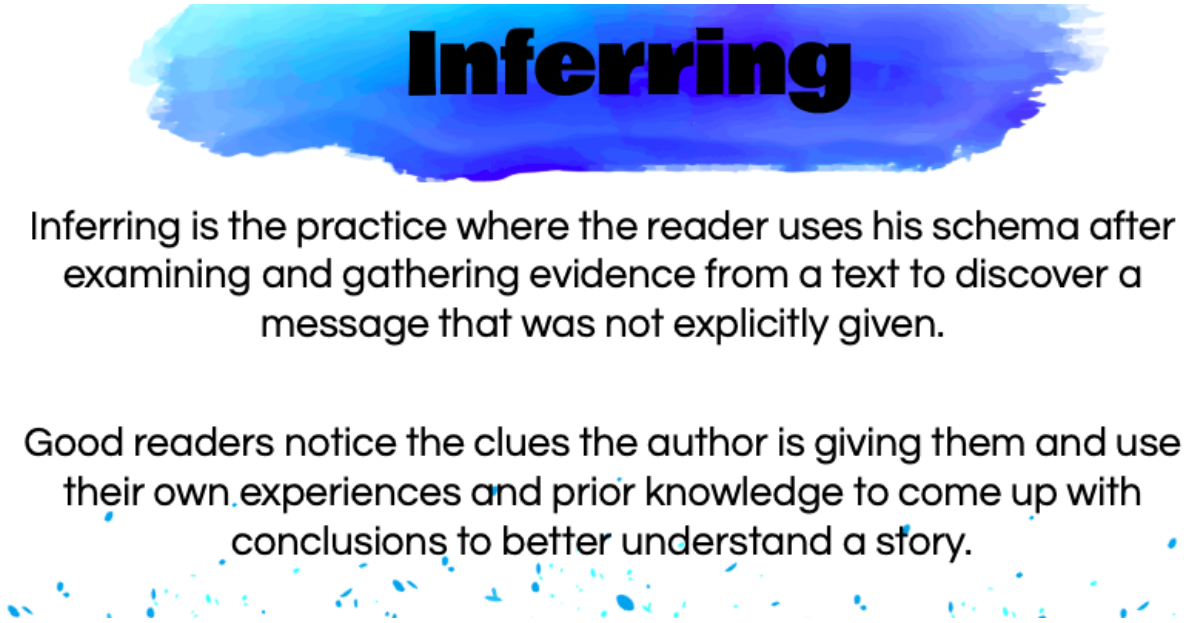

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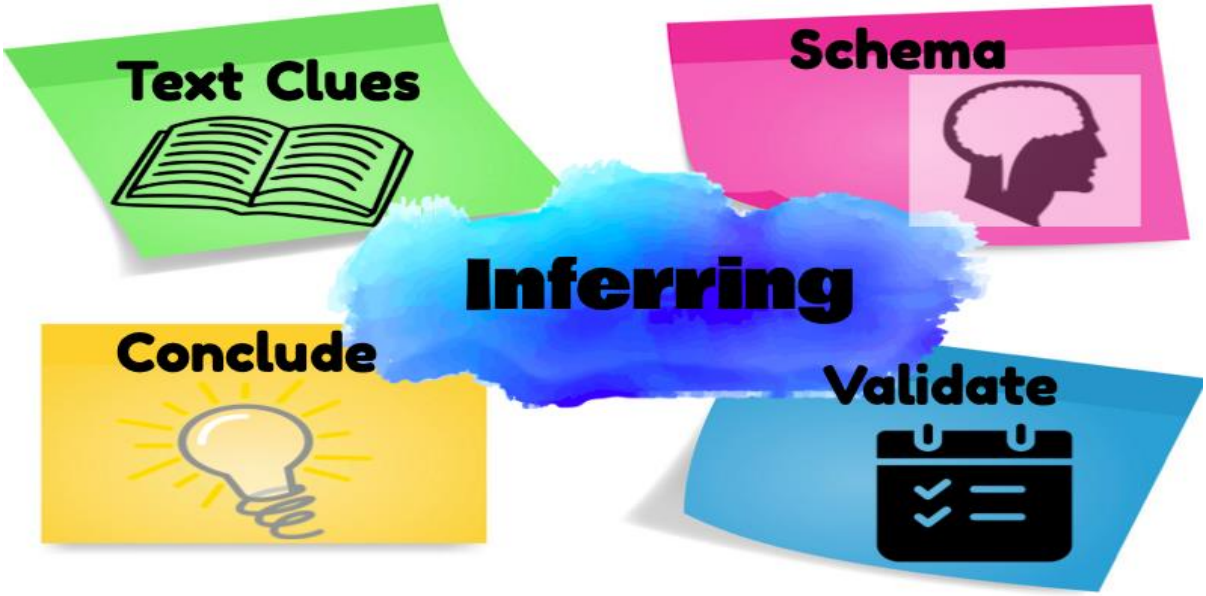


Slide #32

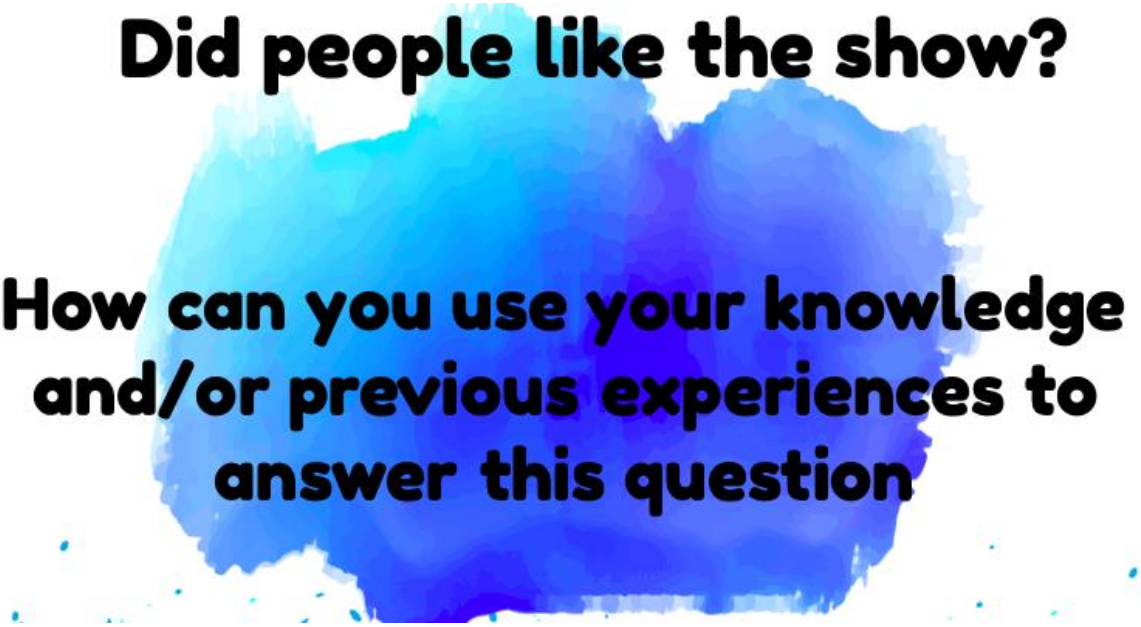
Slide #33

Slide #34

How is the bunny feeling ?

Is there any clue that we can use to figure it out ?

Slide #35



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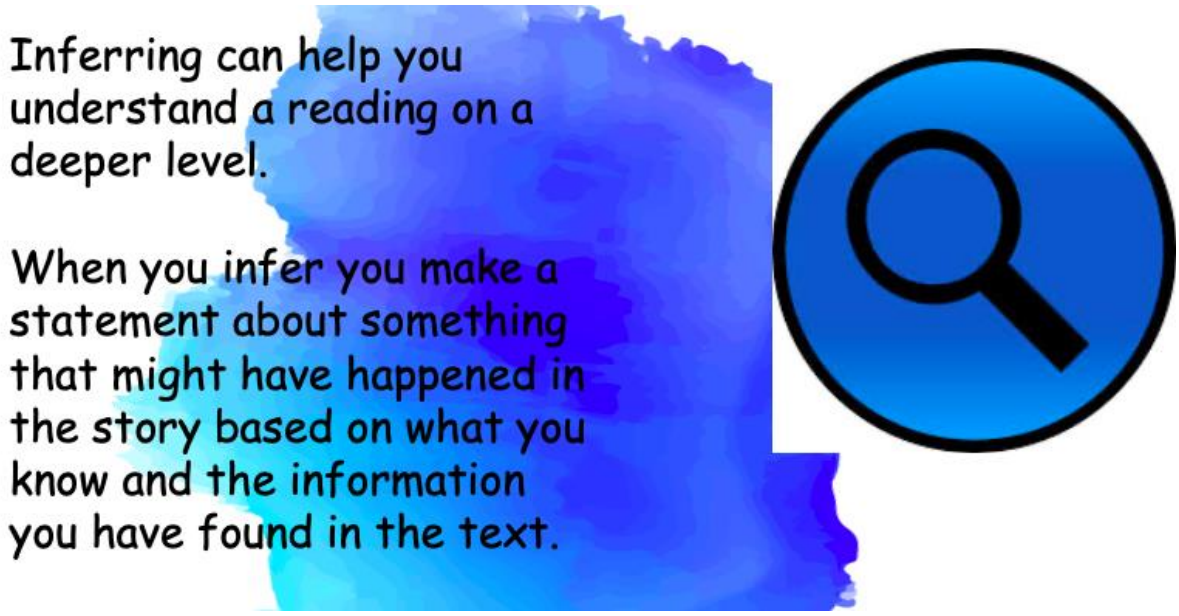
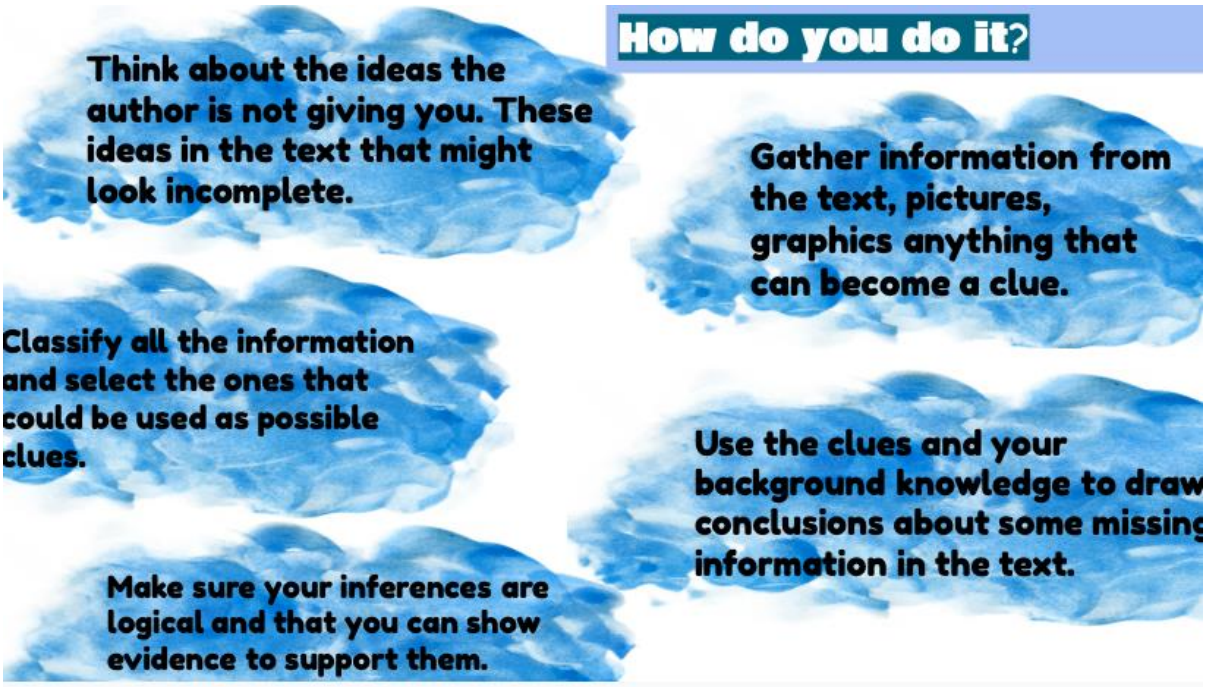


Slide #37

Slide #38



Slide #39

Slide #40

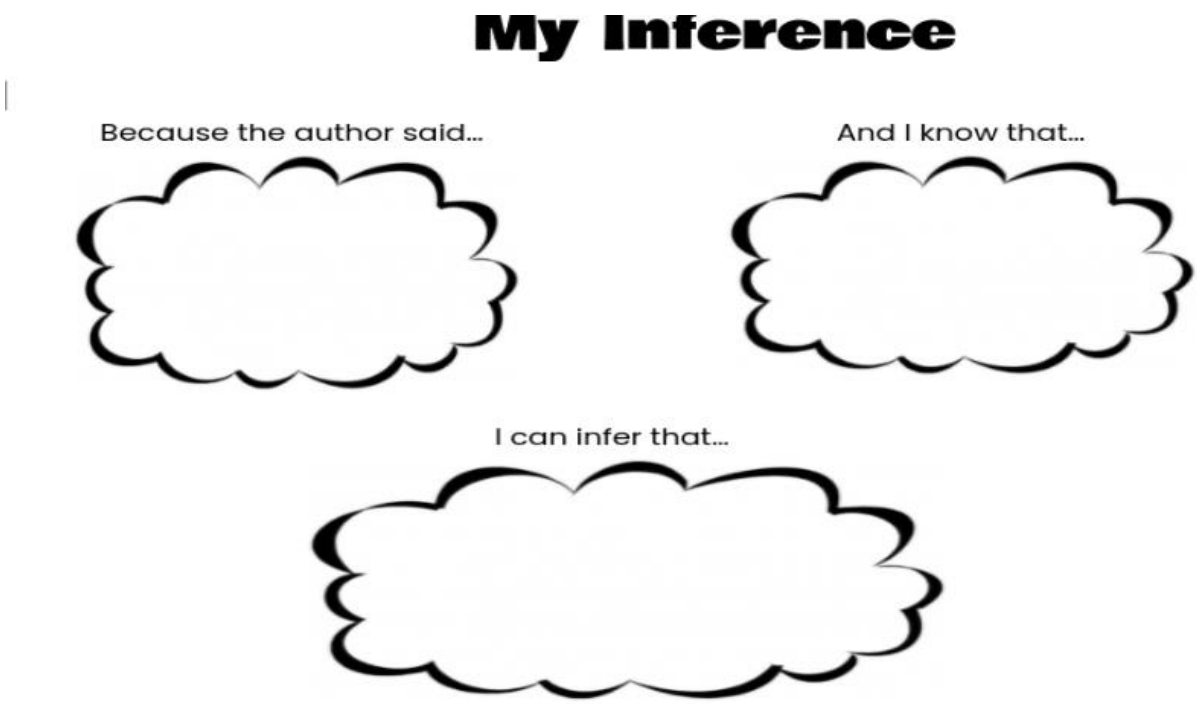
Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Reading: _____

Directions: Make inferences as you read. Use the graphic organizer below to record them.

Text clue	What I Know	My inference

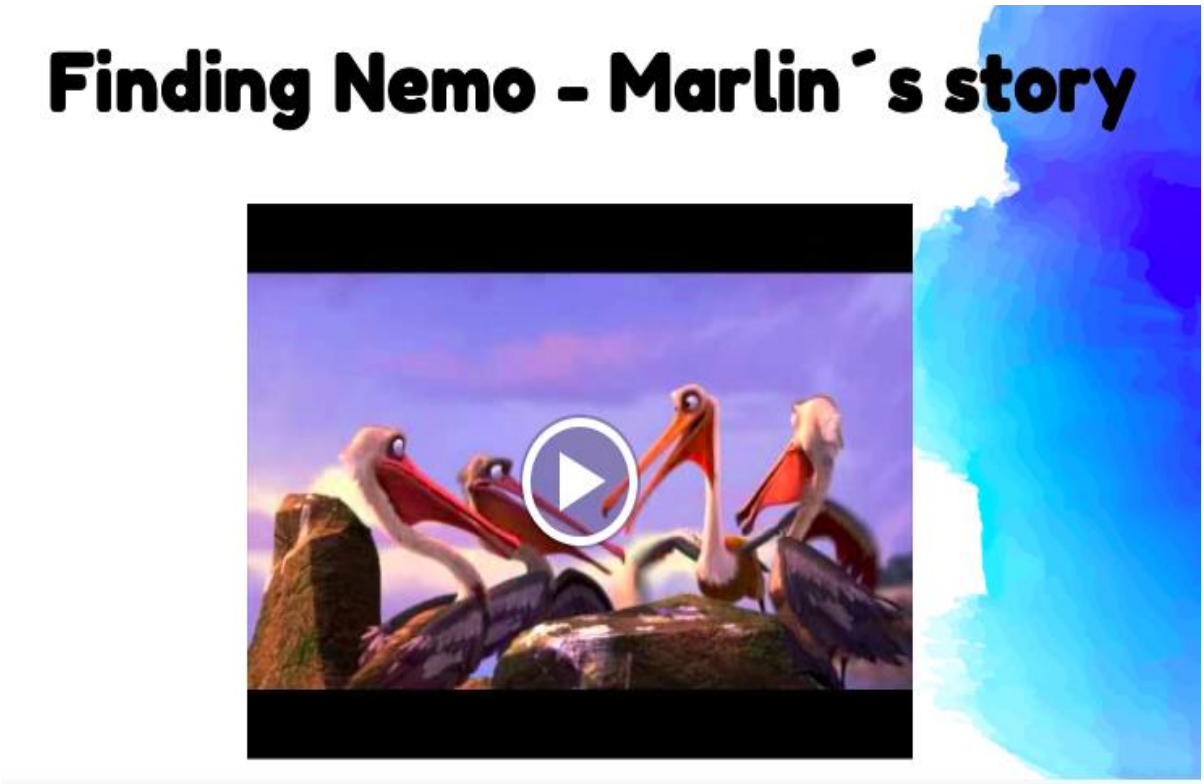
Slide #41



Slide #42

Slide #43

Slide #44



Slide #45

What is Marlin's story about?

How many people get to know his story?

Slide #46

Where they all telling the same version of the story?

How was the story different?

How was the story the same?

Slide #47

Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Summarizing is the practice where the reader identifies the main points in a story and unifies them in a brief and concise way.

When paraphrasing, the reader retells the same in story in their own words.

Good readers synthesize the information the author is giving them by connecting the main ideas. They also talk about the author's ideas in their own words.

Slide #48

Olaf tells Elsa and Anna´s story

Slide #49

What movie was Olaf describing?

What do you think about his version of the story?

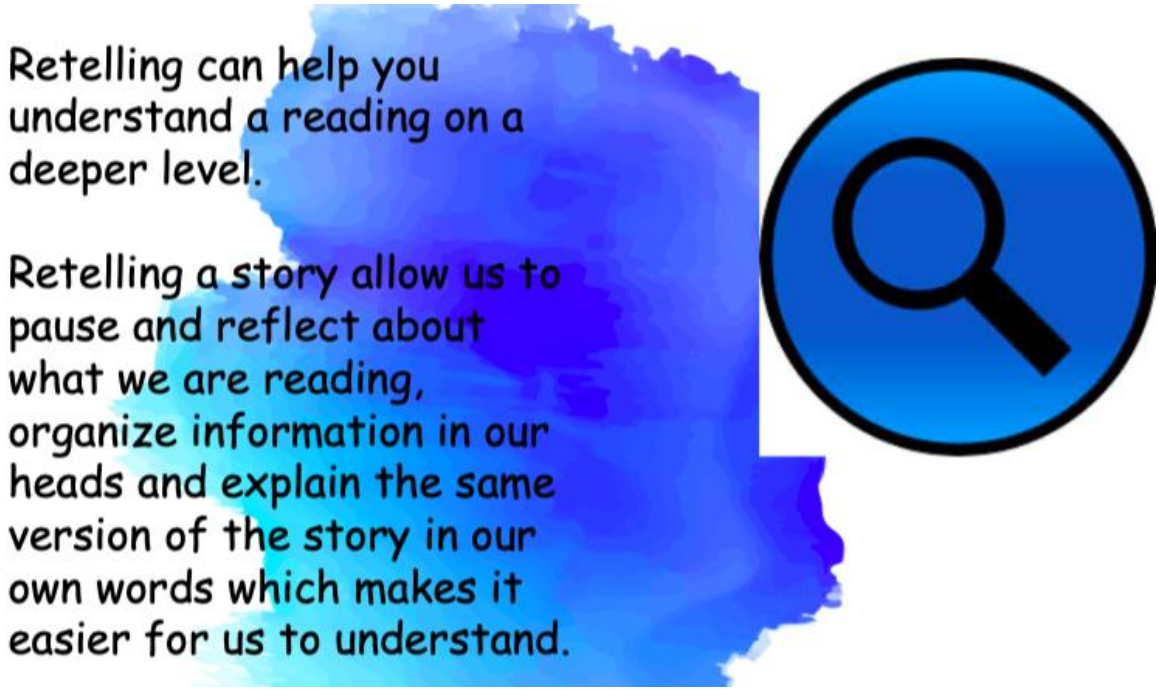
Slide # 50

Is this version different from the original story/ if so in what ways ?

Slide #51

Slide #52

Slide #53



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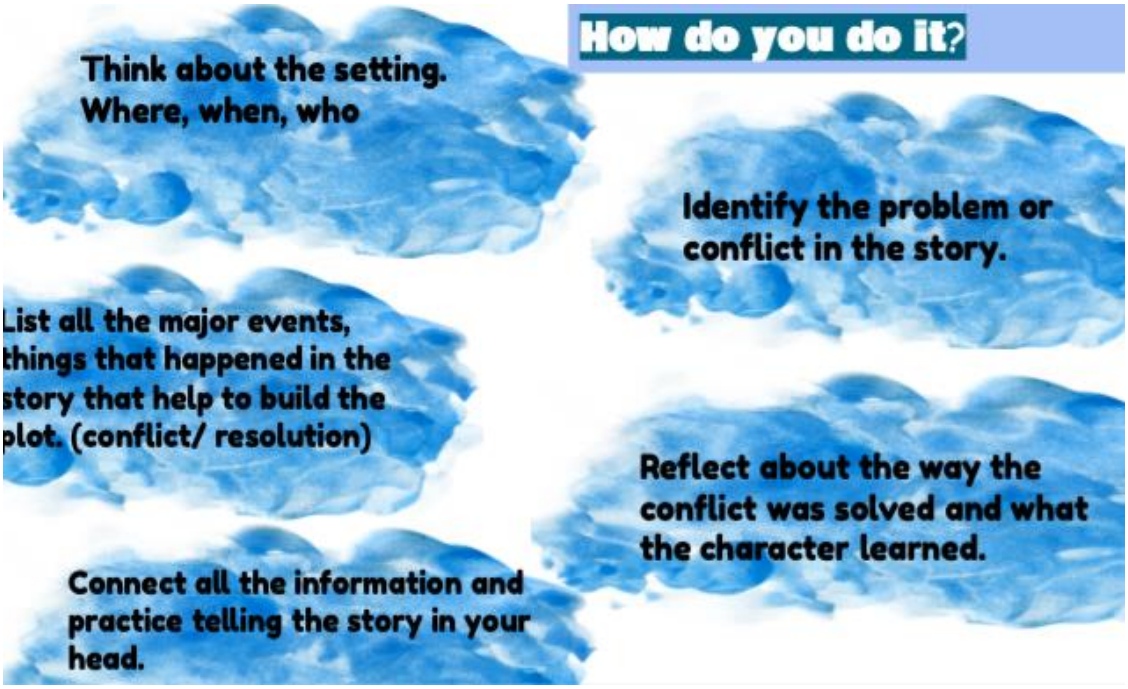
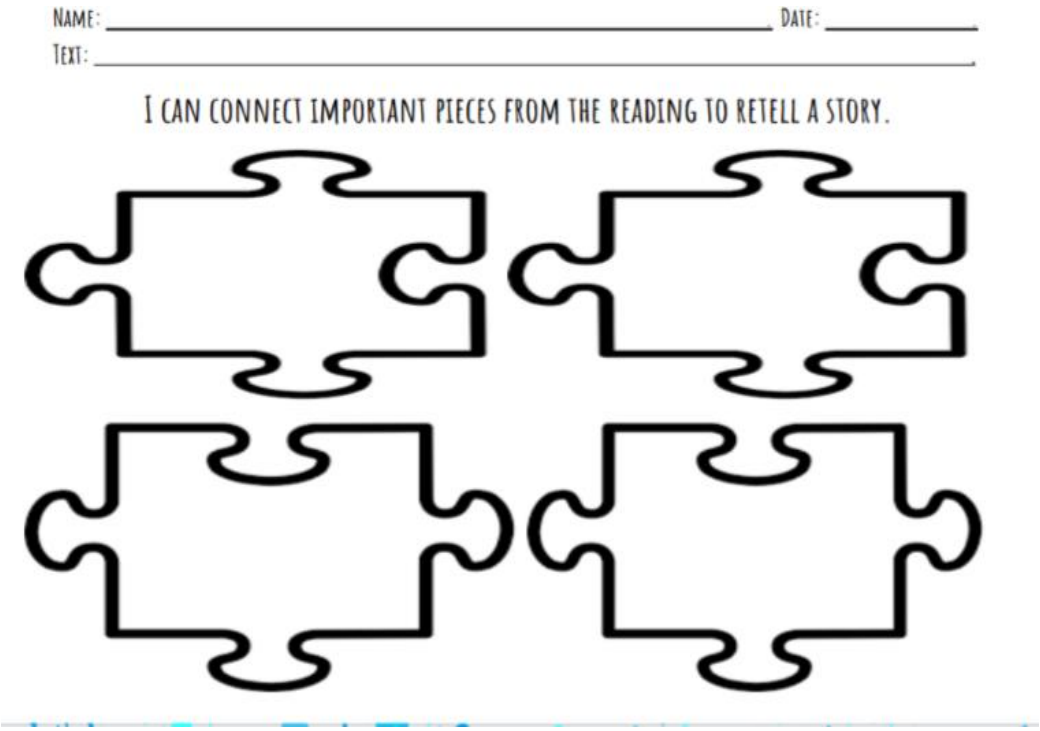


Slide #55

Slide #56



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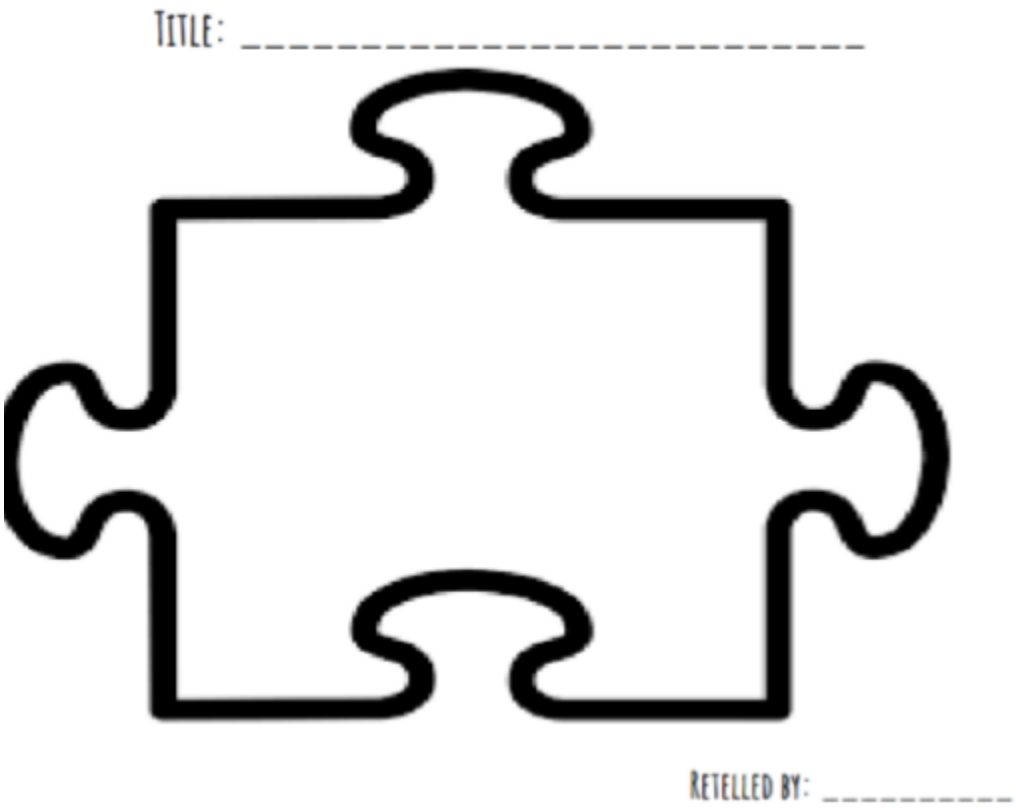

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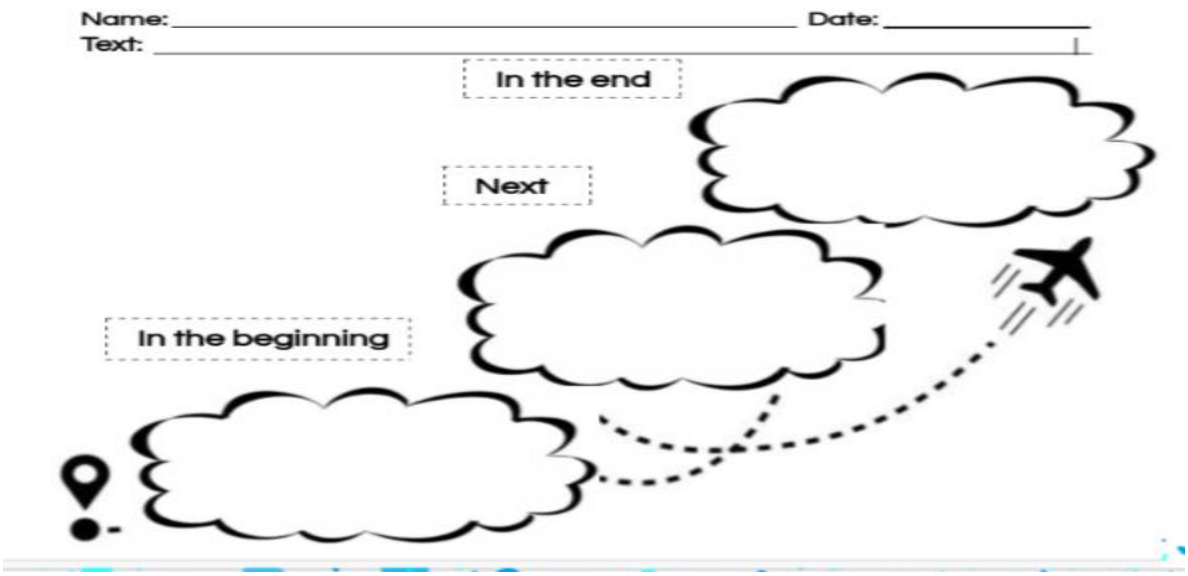

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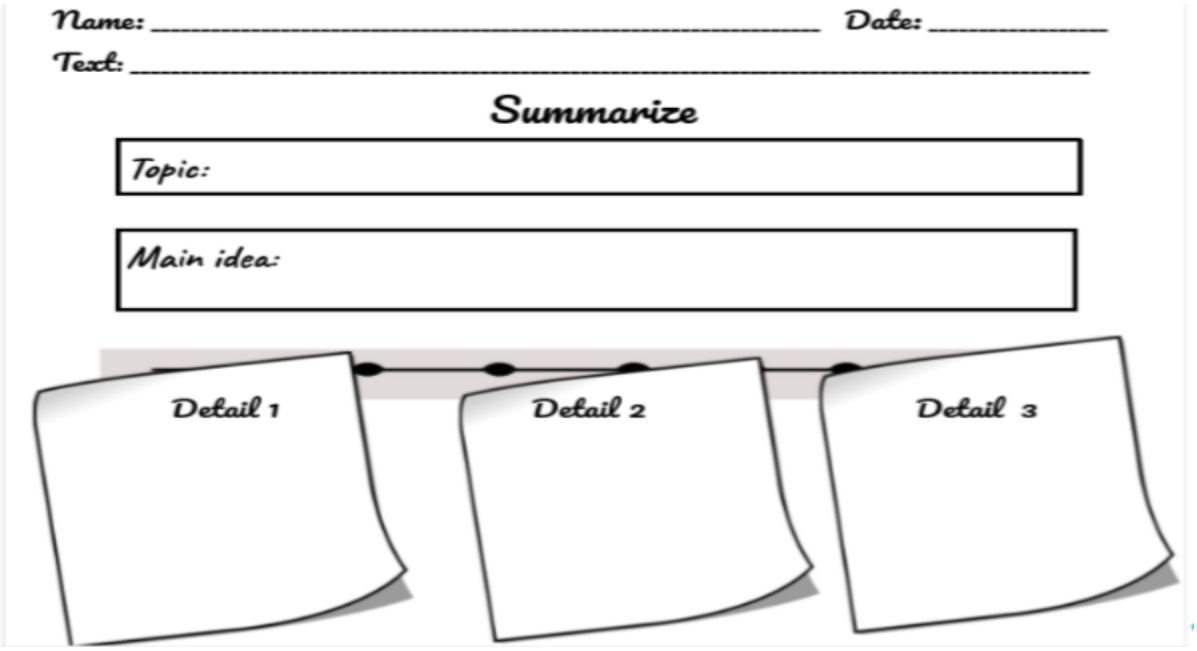
Slide #59



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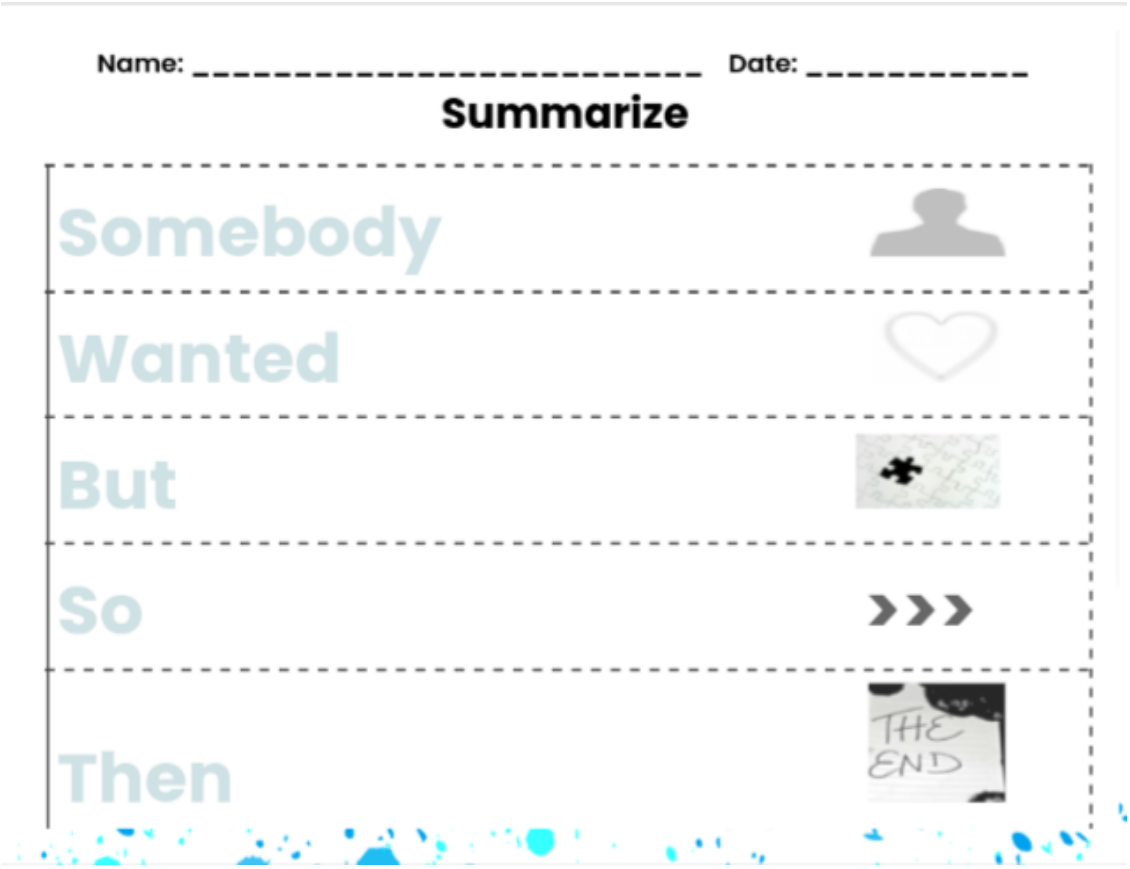

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